THE
Martyrdom
OF
THEODORA,
And of
DIDYMUS.

By a Perſon of Honour.

LONDON:

Printed by *H. Clark*, for *John Ta*[illegible] at the Ship in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard, 1687.

SUCH AN

ACCOUNT

Of the following

BOOK,

Sent with it to a

FRIEND;

As may ſerve inſtead of a

PREFACE.

TO convince you, Sir, how much more I am concern'd to have you think, I can Obey well, than Write well; I venture to ſend you the *Account*, (as imperfect and unpoliſh'd as it is) that you are pleas'd to command *Of the laſt Hours of Theodora.* But I muſt beg your leave to accompany it with another *Account* (though but a ſhort one) how I came to meddle with

this Subject; and why what I present you about it, is so much Maim'd, and has no more Uniformity.

Having had occasion many years ago to turn over a Martyrology, and some other Books, that related to the Sufferings of the Primitive Christians; I chanc'd to light on those of a Virgin, who, though (to my wonder) she was left unnam'd by the other Writers that mention'd her, seem'd plainly to be the same, that is by one of them expressly call'd *Theodora*: I own, I was not a little affected, at the reading of such moving and uncommon adventures as hers: and finding her story to be related, by the Author that nam'd both her and her Lover, not only very succinctly and imperfectly, but very dully too; I found my self tempted so to enlarge this Story, as that it might be contriv'd into a somewhat voluminous Romance: But upon

upon ſecond thoughts, it appeared incongruous to turn a Martyr into a Nymph or an Amazon: And I conſider'd too, that (to omit what elſe might be objected againſt that ſort of Compoſures) *as* true Pearls are Cordials and Antidotes, which counterfeit ones, how fine ſoever they may appear, are not; *ſo* True Examples do arm and fortify the mind far more efficaciouſly, than Imaginary or Fictitious ones can do; and the fabulous labours of *Hercules*, and Exploits of *Arthur* of *Britain*, will never make men aſpire to Heroick Vertue half ſo powerfully, as the real Examples of Courage and Gallantry afforded by *Jonathan Cæſar*, or the *Black Prince*. But yet, thinking it great pity, that ſo ſhining a Vertue as *Theodora*'s ſhould prove Exemplary, but to her own time, and to one City; and remembring, that ſoon after the Age which ſhe Ennobl'd, it was counted among the Primitive Chriſtians an act of Piety, to build

fair Monuments, upon the formerly abject Graves of the Martyrs; to repay, by Honours done to their Memories, the indignities and Disgraces they had ſuffer'd in their Perſons; I thought fit to try, if I could reſcue from more unskilful Hands than even mine, a ſtory that abundantly deſerv'd to be well told.

But upon further thoughts, I ſoon foreſaw, that this Task was not moreworthy to be undertaken, than it would prove difficult to be well perform'd: For the Martyrologiſt having allow'd ſcarce one whole Page, to a Relation, that perhaps merited a Volume, had left ſo many Chaſms, and ſo many neceſſary things unmentioned, that I plainly perceiv'd, I wanted a far greater number of Circumſtances, than that he had ſupply'd me with to make up ſo maim'd a ſtory tolerably compleat. And as the Relation deny'd me matter enough to work upon,

upon, ſo the nature of the Subject refus'd moſt of thoſe Imbelliſhments which in other Themes, where young Gallants and fair Ladies are the chief Actors, are wont to ſupply the deficiences of the matter. Beſides, my task was not near ſo eaſie as it would have been, if I had been only to recite the Intrigues of an Amour, with the liberty to feig ſurprizing adventures, to adorn the Hiſtorical part of the account, and to make a Lover ſpeak as Paſſionately as I could, and his Miſtreſs as Kindly as the indulgenteſt laws of decency would permit. But I was to introduce a Chriſtian and pious Lover, who was to contain the expreſſions of his Flame within the narrow bounds of his Religion; and a Virgin, who, being as modeſt and diſcreet as handſom, and as devout as either, was to own an high Eſteem for an excellent Lover, and an uncommon Gratitude to a tranſcendent Benefactor,

factor, without intrenching either upon her Vertue, or her Reſervedneſs. And I perceiv'd the difficulty of my Task would be encreas'd, by that of Reconciling *Theodora*'s Scrupulouſneſs to the humours of ſome young Perſons of Quality of either Sex, who were earneſt to engage my Pen on this occaſion, and would expect that I ſhould make *Theodora* more kind, than I thought her great Piety and ſtrict Modeſty would permit. But for all this; the eſteem I had for the fair Martyrs Excellencies, and the compliance I had for thoſe that deſir'd to receive an account of ſo rare a Perſons actions and Sufferings, made me reſolve to try what I could do. Which I adventur'd upon with the leſs Reluctancy, becauſe, though I eſteem'd it a kind of Profaneneſs, to transform a piece of Martyrology into a Romance; yet I thought it allowable enough, where a Narrative was written ſo conciſely, and left

left so unperfect, as That I had to descant upon; to make such supplements of Circumstances, as were not improbable in the nature of the thing, and were little less than necessary to the clearness and entireness of the Story, and the decent connection of the parts it should consist of. I suppos'd too, that I needed not scruple, to lend Speeches to the Persons I brought upon the Stage, provided they were suitable to the Speakers, and Occasions; since I was warranted by the Examples of *Livy*, *Plutarch*, and other Grave and Judicious Historians, who make no scruple to give us set Orations, of their own framing, and sometimes put them into the mouths of Generals at the head of their Armies, just going to give Battel: though at such times the hurry and distraction that both they and their Auditors must be in, must make it very unlikely, either that they should make elaborate Speeches, or their Hearers

mind

mind and remember them well enough to repeat them to the Hiſtorians.

Encourag'd by theſe Liberti es, which I thought I might juſtly allow my ſelf: I drew up, as well as I could, what you have been told I wrote about *Theodora*. This I thought fit to divide into twoparts; in the firſt whereof, (which was leſs remote from being Romantick) I gave ſomewhat at large the Characters of them both. I mention'd the riſe and progreſs of *Didymus*'s Love; the degeneracy of the then Chriſtians, which provok'd Divine Providence, to expoſe them to a very Bloody Perſecution: I declar'd, how *Theodora* being involv'd in it, was brought before the *Preſident* of *Antioch*; how ſhe reſolutely own'd her Religion before him, anſwer'd His Arguments, and reſiſted both his Promiſes, and his Menaces; how thereupon the Judge doom'd her either to Sacrifice,

fice, or to be proſtituted in the publick *Stews*. How ſhe, after an eager Debate in her own mind, refuſing to offer facrifice, was, (notwithſtanding her ſilence) led away to the infamous place; how being ſhut up there alone in a Room, ſhe employ'd the little time, that was granted her to conſider whether ſhe would yet burn Incenſe to the *Roman* Idols, in fervent Prayer to the true God, for a reſcue of her Purity, not her Life; in order whereunto, ſhe deſign'd and hop'd by Reſiſtance and Contumelies to provoke her firſt Aſſailant, to become her Murderer, rather than her Raviſher.

Theſe were the chief Contents of the firſt Book. Thoſe of the ſecond, were more Hiſtorical; and conſiſted of an account of the laſt hours of her Life, and particularly of thoſe Sufferings that ended in her and *Didymus*'s glorious Martyrdom. This piece having been perus'd

perus'd by thoſe for whoſe ſake I wrote it; was ſo fortunate, that it having, without my leave, been ventur'd into ſeveral hands, as a Book of a nameleſs and unknown Author, it was lucky enough to be, by ſome indulgent Readers, attributed to One, and by ſome to Another, of the two Perſons, that were at that time counted the beſt writers of diſguis'd Hiſtories. But among the many Hands it paſs'd through, it ſeems it fell into ſome, out of which a great part of the looſe ſheets, (which were not bound in a Book, but only tack'd together) were not to be retriev'd: whether it were by the negligence, or the contempt, that ſome had of ſo unpoliſh'd a Work; or whether there were ſome fatality in the Buſineſs, that *Theodora*s Sufferings ſhould outlive her, and her Story be as ill us'd as her Perſon had been. This loſs, (if it can deſerve that name) I did not much regret: Since I intend-

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ed not to make the loſt Papers publick, and had receiv'd much greater approbation and thanks than they merited, from the particular Perſons they were deſign'd for. But after I had for many years worn out, not only the ſenſe, but the memory of this loſs: It was made more troubleſom to me, than ever it was at firſt, by the earneſt ſolicitations of ſome eminent Perſons, that had a great power over me, and ſome of them the repute of great Judges of this kind of Compoſures. For having ſeen ſeveral Sheets, that I accidentally lighted on, in tumbling over ſome long neglected Papers; they oblig'd me to cauſe thoſe old rude ſheets to be tranſcrib'd. And tho' almoſt all the firſt Book was wanting, (upon which account, I could not be remov'd from my Reſolution not to trouble my ſelf about it) yet there was ſo much of the Second Book, but in parts no way Coherent, little by little retriev'd,

triev'd, that a pretence was afforded to preſs me to repair thoſe Breaches, and reſtore out of my memory, or otherwiſe, a piece, which they would needs perſwade me might do ſome good, by rendring Vertue Amiable, and recommending Piety to a ſort of Readers, that are much more affected by ſhining Examples, and pathetical Expreſſions, than by dry Precepts, and grave Diſcourſes.

If ſome of your more ſcrupulous Friends ſhall object, that I have mention'd *Theodoras* Beauty more often and advantagouſly, and repreſented her Lovers Paſſion more Pathetically, than the ſubject of the ſtory exacted, and the truth requir'd in Hiſtory would warrant; I ſhall not altogether deny the Charge: Being rather content to have it thought, that a youthful and heated fancy tranſported my Pen, ſomewhat beyond the narrow

narrow bounds of Hiſtory, than that ſo Pious a perſon as *Didymus* did not keep both his Flame, and the Expreſſions of it, within the limits of Reaſon and Religion. But though I pretend not to juſtifie, all that has been ſaid in the ſtrain of an Encomiaſt, or a Lover, yet I hop'd that I may much Extenuate, if not Excuſe it, by repreſenting ſuch things as theſe.

That I have been careful, that *Theodora* ſhould not be made to do, or ſay, any thing, that, the great Obligations ſhe had to her Reſcuer conſider'd, do intrench either upon her Piety, or her Vertue, or ſo much as upon her Reſerv'dneſs.

That as for *Didymus*; I might ſay, that probably he thought, thoſe Celebrations that would have been Flattery to another Lady, were but Juſtice to a Perſon ſo Extraordinary, and ſo accompliſh'd

as his Miſtreſs; and that he thought it allowable, not to ſuppreſs the chaſt effects of a Paſſion, that has not only been incident to Heroes, but perhaps help'd to make them ſuch. But I will rather ſay, that thoſe only are like to find much fault with his Expreſſions, *who* conſider not how free they are from any degree of Prophaneneſs or Immodeſty: And *who* are not accuſtomed to the reading of Stories, where Lovers are introduc'd, and made to Praiſe and Complement in a far more Bold and Romantick way, than I allowed my ſelf in the following Paper. In which, all the Deference, wherewith *Irene* as well as *Didymus* treat *Theodora*, may be be accounted for by this; That I remember'd to have, in ſome Author or other, found Mention made of a Perſon about *Dioclesian*'s time, Whom I took for our Martyr, that was intimated to be of high Quality, if not a *Princeſs*.

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which Title I had without ſcruple given Her, If I had been half as ſure that ſhe Was a *Princeſs*, as that ſhe Deſerv'dto be One.

That perhaps I was not unwilling, both to ſhew the Perſons I wrote for, that One might have glittering *Idea*'s of Beauty, without being dazl'd by them; and alſo to convince them, that high Complements and paſſionate expreſſions, are no certain Marks of His being really *Smitten* (to ſpeak in a Lovers Phraſe) that can Imploy them; ſince I retain'd my wonted freedom of mind, while I was Writing; and preſented them by the mouth of *Didymus*, but what Fancy, not Paſſion indited.

And laſtly, I was induc'd to allow my ſelf a more faſhionable Stile, than would perhaps be ſuitable to a meer Sermon, or Book of Divinity, becauſe I fear'd, that the Youthful Perſons of Quality of both

Sexes, that I was chiefly to regard, would ſcarce be ſufficiently affected by unfortunate Vertue, if the interweaving of paſſages relating to Beauty and Love, did not help to make the Tragical ſtory, Delightful, and the Excellent Sufferers Piety, Amiable.

If it be objected, that in ſome of the diſcourſes of the two Martyrs, there are Paſſages that argue more Knowledge, than is likely to have been found in Lay Perſons no Elder than they. I anſwer, that ſuch Diſcourſes indeed were ſomewhat ſtrange, if they were aſcrib'd to a young Gallant, and a younger Lady, of Our degenerate Times; wherein ſo many Perſons of that ſort, make Diverſion their grand Buſineſs; and, having as little Leiſure as Concern to mind any thing, but their Pleaſures and petty Intereſts, think it their Priviledge to know little of Religion, and leave to meaner People the ſtudy of things

things Serious and Uſeful. But, *though* among this ſort of Perſons, it were ſo difficult to find many that would Emulate ſuch Knowledge and Vertue as ſhin'd in *Theodora*; that I fear they would not ſo much as believe them; *yet* among better qualify'd Judges, the lately propos'd objection will be of no great force, if it be conſider'd, that *Didymus* and *Theodora* liv'd in the Primitive and devout times of the Church, and in the *Roman* Empire, when the Chriſtian Religion was as diligently Taught by Excellent Divines, as frequently Oppos'd by Arguments, and violently aſſaulted by Perſecutions. Upon which ſcores, the zealous Candidates of Martyrdom, many of which obtain'd the Crown of it, even in their greener Age, were early and skilfully inſtructed in the truths of their own Religion, and furniſh'd with good Arguments, both to Defend It, and Confute the Erroneous Opinions and Impious wor-

ſhips of their Heathen Adverſaries. Nor is it any wonder, that they ſhould think That Religion worth Studying, that they thought worth Dying for. I will not here examine, whether the Ignorance wont to be imputed to Women, be Their fault, or that of their Accuſers, and whether it is any natural want of Capacity, or rather want of Inſtruction, that keeps moſt of them from Knowledge, though This regards not Sexes. But without inquiry, whether it be not our Intereſt, or our Envy, that Makes Women what we are wont to decry them for Being; I ſhall not ſcruple to own, that I have ſometimes had the honour to converſe with Ladys, that convinc'd me, That, to attain to a great proficiency in Knowledge, 'tis not neceſſary to be a Doctor of Divinity, or ſo much as a Man, ſince they diſcours'd of Divine things, with no leſs Wit than Piety. And to return to our Martyr, if we

may

may judge by the Effects, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that our Virgins Parents not only thought it their Duty, but took much Pleaſure, to Cultivate ſo excellent and promiſing a Subject as their fair Daughter. Since great advantages of Nature and general Grace ſhould rather Invite, than Excuſe, Improvements by Education; as even the *Garden of Eden*, though an admirably fertile Soil, and planted by God's own Hands, was not ſo left to itſelf, but that *Adam* was appointed to dreſs it, and to keep it. And if the Diſcourſes of our Martyrs are ſometimes leſs ſhort than they might have been made; I hope it may be ſome excuſe, that I was not unwilling, to lay hold now and then of the Riſes afforded me by ſome occaſions, to ſhew, that Romantick Subjects are not, as too many Perſons of Quality think them, the Only ones, that may be treated of in a Gentleman-like ſtile; and that even

ſome noble Queſtions in Divinity, and ſome of the ſeverer Dictates of the Chriſtian Morals, may be diſcours'd of, without the harſhneſs of the School Terms, or the downright plainneſs of ſome better Meant, than Pen'd, Books of Theology and Devotion.

'Tis like Sir, you will think it ſtrange, that I make ſo Pious a Perſon as *Theodora*, offer her Breaſt to *Didymus*'s Sword, and by ſoliciting him to Kill her, tempt him to an Action, which would make *her* guilty of a Murder, and make *him* greatly acceſſory to it. But poſſibly her Action would not appear very ſtrange, if we were not too enclinable to eſtimate the Affairs of Paſt Times, and Remote Regions, by the Opinions and Cuſtomes of our own Age and Countrys. For, what ever we now juſtly think of the ſinfulneſs of Deſtroying a Mans ſelf, whether immediately or otherwiſe, yet I muſt not

deny

deny, but that divers of the Ancient Christians thought it not Criminal, when it was necessary for the preservation of Chastity. And, if I much misremember not, St. *Jerom* himself, where he speaks of the unlawfulness of Self-destroying, intimates, that he excepts the Case of an inevitable danger of a Rape. But my chief answer is, that having found the Virgin Martyrs proposal expresly deliver'd by the Author I was to follow, I judg'd it the part of an Historian not to suppress it; which I acknowledge, I the rather declin'd to do, because *Theodoras* offer was a noble evincement, both of her Gratitude and her Generosity. And therefore, instead of Omitting so considerable an Action of hers, I chose rather to Set my thoughts a work, to find a plausible Colour for it. Which whether I have happily done, by supplying her with the Example of a Prophet, who, though he would not cast

caſt Himſelf into the Sea, yet ſolicited Others to caſt him, (and that having firſt bound him) I muſt leave You to judge.

I freely confeſs, Sir, that, if the following Piece had been written by One, that I were fond of Cenſuring, I could my ſelf find enough in it to Criticize upon; and ſhould object againſt it, beſides the want of Uniformity throughout, That if judg'd of by the ſtrict Rules of Art, it ought to paſs for an Irregular Piece. And therefore I ſhall not wonder, if Nicer Criticks, and more vers'd in Exquiſite Compoſures than I pretend to be, ſhall find fault with this Artleſs one of mine. But the reception that the following Papers met with, from the Perſons for whom they were chiefly written, affords me the Conſolation deri vable from the ingenious ſaying of that excellent Wit, who declar'd, *He had rather the Diſhes*

ſerv'd

ſerv'd up at his Treat, ſhould pleaſe the Gueſts, than the Cooks. And I might ſay too, that ſome of the Paſſages that may meet with Cenſure, would perhaps eſcape it; if in writing this Book many years agoe, I had not had ſome Aims, that I then thought more fit to be Purſu'd, than I now do to be Declar'd. Yet I will not here diſſemble, that I know it may be thought by ſome, that this Paper ſhould have conſiſted leſs of Converſations, and more of Narratives. But I choſe the way of Writing I have employ'd, *partly* becauſe the Authors I met with furniſh'd me with ſo very few matters of Fact, that if I would have confin'd my ſelf to Relations; I muſt have compriz'd this piece in a very few Pages, and have finiſh'd it preſently after I had begun it: And *partly* too, (and indeed much more) becauſe (as I lately began to intimate) my chief deſign was not ſo much, to perform

perform the Office of a meer Hiſtorian, as to take Riſes from the ſeveral Circumſtances I ſhould relate, to convey unperceivedly, into the minds of thoſe young Perſons of Quality for whom I wrote, Sentiments of true Piety and Vertue. And theſe I thought would not ſo happily gain admittance and entertainment, if they were preſented in a Scholar like-Diſcourſe, or a profeſs'd Book of devotion, as when they were taken, not from common places but from the Nature of the Things and Perſons Introduc'd; and without formality Inſtill'd by the occaſional diſcourſes of a young Gentleman and fair Lady, for whom the Beauty and the Merit aſcrib'd to the Speakers, had given the Hearers a great Eſteem and Kindneſs. And I ſhall not ſcruple to own, that I, who who value time above moſt other things, did not think it worth the expence of mine, to give my ſelf the trouble of Writing a Book, only to give others a Divertiſement in

Reading

Reading it. And whilſt I was Converſing with ſuch Excellent Company, as our noble Martyrs, and Meditating on ſuch Serious Subjects, as are Death, and the Worth of that Heavenly Religion for whoſe ſake They deſpis'd It; I found my ſelf Incited, and thought my ſelf Oblig'd, to aim leſs at the Pleaſing of ſome few Nice Exactors of Regularity, than to Poſſeſs many Readers with high and noble Sentiments of the Chriſtian Religion, and the ſublime Dictates of it; and thereby both Elevate their minds to a generous Contempt of all they can loſe and ſuffer for it, and Fill them with bright *Idea*'s of Heroick Vertue, and of the much brighter Glories that will Crown it. By ſuch Reflections, I was induc'd not to omit ſome Paſſages that ſeem'd likely to further the main Ends I purſu'd, though I foreſaw, that perhaps ſome rigid Judges would ſay, that they might have been ſpar'd.

For

For *as* I writ not a Romance, wherein Authors are wont to aim no higher, than to Delight the Delicate Readers, and Eſcape the Critical ones, by making their Compoſures Diverting and Regular; *ſo* I preſum'd that to employ a more Uſeful, though leſs Faſhionamble way of Writing, was allowable for Me, who ought *to* endeavour in ſuch a piece as This, rather to propoſe Patterns of Vertue, than Models of Skill or Eloquence; and *to* think it more Succeſsful, if the Readers ſhall upon peruſing it, Imitate our excellent Martyrs Piety, than if they ſhould only Applaud their Hiſtory. Which both as to Stile and Reaſonings, is freely ſubmitted to your Judgment, by

Sir,

your moſt &c.

THE

ERRATA.

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Some Books Printed for, and Sold by John Taylor, *at the* Ship *in St.* Paul's Church-yard.

A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Receiv'd Notion of Nature, made in an Eſſay, addreſs'd to a Friend. In *Engliſh* and *Latine*, for the Benefit of Forreiners. By *R. B.* Fellow of the *Royal Society*.

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The Happy Aſcetick, or the beſt Exerciſe; with a Letter to a Perſon of Quality, concerning the Lives of the Primitive Chriſtians. By *Anthony Horneck*, D. D. Preacher at the *Savoy*.

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THE Martyrdom OF THEODORA.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

THough it may ſeem ill-natur'd to leave the Chaſt *Theodora* in ſo deplorable a Condition, yet it is requiſite to do ſo for a while, that we may learn what was attempted to reſcue her out of it.

It is not to be doubted, but that *Didymus* was not long kept a ſtranger to the barbarous uſage ſhe had ſuffered. That of ſo illuſtrious a Lady could not but make a great noiſe, and reach a multitude of ears; and eſpecially thoſe of ſo concern'd a Perſon as *Didymus*: The wounds of Lovers tender hearts, giving them oftentimes ſecret Preſages of approaching misfortunes relating to their Love: As many other wounded men have the unhappy Priviledge of being able, by feeling of pain, to diſcern ſuch approaches of ill weather, as affect not unhurt men.

Didymus therefore being quickly too much aſcertain'd of the unwelcome News of the diſtreſs of his fair Miſtreſs, was too generous a Lover to deliberate, whether he ſhould expoſe his life for her reſcue: His deliberation being only about the means, how to make ſo difficult an attempt a proſperous one. In order to this, he

he happily finds out one of the Officers of the Guards, that were placed about the infamous Houſe, to which *Theodora* was condemned: Who having been his fellow Soldier in the Roman Armies; he hoped would either for the ſake of Vertue or of *Didymus*, be prevail'd with to further ſo handſom a Deſign as his.

Wherefore addreſſing himſelf to this Commander, with a very obliging and yet civil Freedom: Generous *Septimius*, ſaies he, I cannot but look upon it as one of the chief advantages I have obtain'd by venturing my Life in the Roman Camps, that I had the happineſs to be acquainted with you there, and to be a ſpectator of your Gallantry; which did not only then raiſe me to a deſire of imitating it, but allows me now to own a requeſt to you, that none but a gallant Perſon ought to be entruſted with, or would eaſily grant. Generous *Didymus*, replies the Roman, When I accompanied you in fol-

lowing our propitious Eagles, I found ſo great a contentment in your acquaintance, and ſo ſtrong a ſpur to Glory, in your examples, that I look'd upon the advantage of having been your fellow Soldier, as preferable to the honour of Leading the moſt numerous Troops I may at any time Command. And I ſhall think all the hazards I then expos'd my ſelf to, abundantly rewarded, if any power they have procured me, may enable me to do you ſervice. Tell me then frankly, in what caſe, and after what manner, you would have it employ'd for you; and as I aſſure my ſelf, that ſo vertuous a Friend as *Dydimus*, will deſire nothing but what is juſt, ſo he may aſſure himſelf, not to be refus'd any ſervice, that is but Dangerous.

Our Lover embolden'd by ſo encouraging a declaration, firſt made him a very grateful Acknowledgment for it, and then proceeded to ſay,

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If you have ever had the happineſs to be acquainted with *Theodora*, or ſo much as to have ſeen her, 'twould be needleſs, as well as improper, for me to offer at giving you a Character of her, which you muſt needs think injurious to her. But if you have not, the ſhortneſs of the time will only permit me to aſſure you, that not only ſhe has given me thoſe Sentiments of her Excellencies, that I never had, nor ever thought my ſelf capable of having, for any of her Sex; but that in other Perſons ſtrangely indiſpos'd to admit ſuch impreſſions, ſhe has often excited ſuch wonder and ſuch flames, as very rarely have been produced in other men, and perhaps, more rarely been merited by other women.

This admirable Perſon, for exerciſing among other vertues, that of an invincible Conſtancy, to her Religion, and refuſing to Sacrifice to *Venus*, *Flora*, and ſome other of thoſe Deities, whom her Perfections might,

though her Religion did not, exempt from adoring; is by your ſavage Preſident condemn'd to be expos'd to the publick Luſt: And a Party of thoſe gallant Roman Soldiers, that uſe to be ſo glorioufly led on by you, to win Battels, conquer Kingdoms, and enlarge at once the Fame and Limits of the Empire, are now employ'd to captivate innocent Virgins, and defend their brutiſh Raviſhers. You may eaſily gueſs by this, continues he, that my requeſt is like to prove an earneſt one; that you would pleaſe to treat with ſome of thoſe ſoldiers of yours, in whom you think you have the greateſt Intereſt, and diſpoſe them to aſſiſt me in reſcuing *Theodora* out of ſo infamous a Priſon, and accept from me greater recompences for doing a handſom action, than they can expect from the Preſident, for doing a barbarous one; I hope I need not tell you, in the haſt this affair requires, that all poſſible care will be taken to keep you from being endanger'd by *Theodoras* deli-

deliverance, nor will I add how unexpreſſible an Obligation you will lay on me, to heighten my gratitude to ſome proportion to your Favours; becauſe I know it muſt neceſſarily fall ſhort of them, and are due to a perſon that loves to do gallant Actions for their own ſake, and had rather have great debts of gratitude, remain due to him, than paid to him; wherefore I ſhall only mind you, that the time is ſo ſhort, that if your aſſiſtance be not as quick as obliging, I fear 'twill be as ineffectual. I ſhall quicken you only by aſſuring you, that when you act for the accompliſh'd *Theodora*, you act for a perſon that has a Right to all that Beauty and Vertue can give one a Title to.

With the ſame freedom, replies *Septimius*, with which you have own'd to me your Religion, I declare to you, that mine is that of my Country, and my Anceſtors; and that I worſhip thoſe propitious Deities, that have made the Romans the Conque-

rors of the World, and rewarded thoſe that adored them with an Univerſal Monarchy; but though I exceedingly approve ſo triumphant a Religion, yet I confeſs to you, that I do not like the waies that the Preſident takes to propogate it: ſuch cruel methods being apt to make the world ſuſpect, that our beſt Argument is Force: And whilſt the Perſecutors think it a glorious thing to ſee the Temples fill'd at any rate; I had rather ſee in them fewer but ſincere Votaries, than have them throng'd with ſuch puſillanimous Diſſemblers, as would not come in, unleſs they were Scar'd in, thither. And, though Terrors and Torments work ſometimes upon the weaker ſort of *Chriſtians*, yet the more reſolute do ſo often deſpiſe them, that our Perſecutions convert not thoſe unhappy perſons, but frequently ſtagger many of our own; and I confeſs freely to you, *Didymus*, that all the Chriſtians Arguments work leſs with me, than our inhumane manner of confuting them.

them. But I do not only disapprove, but detest, this infamous Practice of our President; which makes him loose not the respect only and the pitty, but the common Humanity we owe to Women, and think to do the Goddesses a service, by disfiguring their fairest Images here below, with the most shameful of Blemishes. I cannot bring my self to imagine, that such gentle Deities, can like such barbarous Worshippers, who not only immolate to them the lives of men, but what is far more precious, the Vertue and Honour of Women; for if I could believe they like such Sacrifices, I should think them unworthy any Sacrifices at all. You will easily therefore, *Didymus*, credit me, that I was absent when my soldiers were put by the insolent Judge, upon so mean an employment. He durst not have offered to have obtruded it upon them, had I been there; or if he had, I had dared to use him as his insolence had deserved. But without loosing time

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in paſſionate Expoſtulations, about things made remedileſs, by being paſt, let us ſpeedily apply our ſelves to the reſcue of *Theodora*. For, though I have heard ſtrange things of her, and ſuch as made me think Fame a great Flatterer, if not a frontleſs Liar, yet I believe the Reports about *Theodora*, as I believe the Delphick Oracles, now that I find ſo undeniable a Teſtimony of her merit, as her being your Miſtreſs. I will therefore without delay, prepare ſome Soldiers to aſſiſt you in her Reſcue, and I cannot doubt the ſucceſs in an attempt made to ſerve a diſtreſt Beauty, and a generous Friend. If there be occaſion, you need not doubt of my more openly appearing for you. For how highly ſoever ſuch an action may provoke the Preſident, or even the Emperour, I hope to let you ſee, that you have truſted a Roman, a perſon that had rather be the object, than the miniſter of their Cruelties, and would not be acceſſary to ſuch a miſemployment of Abſolute Power,

er, to be made a Sharer in it.

As ſoon as *Septimius* had ended theſe words, he did, to prevent thoſe acknowledgments he ſaw *Didymus* was about to make him, take that gallant Youth by the hand; and leading him towards the place, where he expected to find the Soldiers he moſt confided in, he entertain'd him in the way about the hopefulleſt Expedients for the compaſſing of his admirable Miſtreſſes Reſcue. And having afterwards ſent for the two perſons, he thought likelieſt to be prevail'd on, to a convenient place, near to that to which they had brought *Theodora*; he briefly, but pathetically, declaring to them, how much the brave *Didymus* was his friend, and how much he deſerv'd to be ſo, enflam'd them with an indignation at the ſavage Preſidents diſgracing them, by ſo infamous an employment, as they were now about; and then aſſur'd them of rewards from *Dydimus*, ſuitable to the liberality of ſo gene-

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rous a Perſon: After which withdrawing himſelf, to give *Didymus* a ſhort account, how far he had proceeded, he left the reſt to be compleated byhim; who prompted by his native liberality, and his high concern, did not ſtay to cheapen his Miſtreſſes Liberty, but with the haſty Paſſion of a Lover, proffer'd them more than even *Septimius*'s promiſes gave them reaſon to expect: Nor would he have declin'd to embrace any Articles of Agreement, they could have propos'd, though the parting with his Life had been one, ſo *Theodoras* Deliverance were another.

The ſence theſe ſoldiers had of the affront put on them, by the Preſident, joyn'd with the Ambition they had to pleaſe their lov'd Commander, and the gratitude his friends profus'd Bounty had newly oblig'd them to; made them quickly accommodate *Didymus* with a military Habit, and prepare ſome of their Comrades to allow him the firſt admittance into her

her Chamber; partly by ſharing ſome of the newly receiv'd Preſents among them, and probably by repreſenting him to them, when thus prepar'd, as a perſon who having been paſſionately in love with *Theodora*, and been ſcornfully ſlighted by her, was deſirous at any rate, to ſatisfie at once his appetite and his revenge. And by this means, before that ſhort time was expir'd, that had been as an Act of Grace, allow'd the diſconſolate Virgin, to deliberate whether ſhe would yet comply with the Judge; an entrance into her Chamber was permitted to her Lover; who (in order not only to his preſent but further Deſign) had purpoſely cloſed the vizor of his Helmet; upon which ſcore, not being knowable by his fair Miſtreſs, he met with from her the reception we have formerly related.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THough, in the ſad Condition wherein our diſguis'd Lover, found his deſolate Miſtreſs, her ſorrow and her fears, did ſomewhat cloud her Beauty, yet they could not hinder her looks from being ſo charming & majeſtick, as to create leſs pitty than reſpect. Wherefore with geſtures, wherein this was as viſible as he could make it, he told her, without approaching too near; Do not, Madam, I beſeech you, add to your other troubles, the apprehenſion, that becauſe I appear in the circumſtances of a Raviſher, I come to commit a Rape: *Theodora* is ſo great an ornament to the Chriſtian Religion, and her Purity is an ornament ſo dear to *Theodora*, that Heaven will not permit, either that *Antioch* ſhould be

be rob'd of one, or ſhe of the other. And therefore, that Providence which you have ſo generouſly truſted, has ſent me to your reſcue, which after the care I have taken to diſpoſe things without doors, 'twill not be difficult to compaſs, if you pleaſe to make uſe of the Military Habit I have brought hither, diſguiſe and convey your ſelf hence. Nor need you be ſolicitous, what will become of me, for I am under the ſame care of the ſame Providence, that now juſtifies your reliance on it, by providing for your eſcape: And I that found means to come in hither, may be ſuccesful in attempting a Retreat, or if I ſhould not ſucceed in it, I ſhall not miſs the joy of paying my Duty, where I had the moſt deſire and cauſe to do it; and ſhall leave the world with the ſatisfaction of having highly oblig'd it, by the preſervation of the moſt accompliſh'd Perſon in it. And Madam, (continues *Didymus*) that you may not doubt the willingneſs or the intentions wherewith this of-

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fer is made you, be pleas'd to know that it comes from the now fortunate *Didymus*, who juſtly thinks that in aſpiring to your acceptance of it, he does leſs proffer a ſervice, than beg a favour, that will not only be a full Recompence, but a high Obligation.

The name of *Didymus*, and Diſcourſe ſo ſuitable to it, made by him that aſſum'd it, ſoon diſſipated the diſmal apprehenſions his habit, and her circumſtances had given her: She knew ſo well his Courage, his Vertue, and his Love, that nothing unlawful or mean, was to be fear'd; but the boldeſt things, if they were as noble as hazardous, might juſtly be expected, from him: So that this attempt did perhaps as much oblige her, as it ſurpris'd her. Wherefore, as ſoon as ſhe had recompos'd her lately diſorder'd thoughts, ſhe told him, with looks ſerene enough to let him ſee how much ſhe truſted him; This action, generous *Didymus*, is of

a nature ſo extraordinary, that my ingratitude would be ſo too, if my ſenſe of it were not. To own and reſcue a perſecuted and affronted Maid, and to do it with more hazard than you need run in the Roman Armies, to purchaſe Fame and Honours, in an action ſo diſintereſſed, and ſo unexampled, that I want words to celebrate it, as well as merit to deſerve it, and power to requite it. But I admire ſo rare an effect of Vertue, (continues ſhe) can conſent to the deſtruction of its Author. No, Generous *Didymus*, 'tis enough that the vertues of *Chriſtians* be treated as crimes by the *Romans*: They muſt not meet the like uſage from *Theodora*; ſhe muſt not purchaſe a life, that ſhe values as little her ſelf as others have cauſe to do, at ſo high a rate, as your partial Charity perſuades you to ſet upon it. For even thoſe that do now moſt pitty me, would repine at the preſervation of my life, if it ſhould coſt that of a Heroe. Eſpecially, if I ſhould deſignedly be

acceſſory to ſo great a Loſs: Which accompanied with a publick Indignation, and my own Reproaches for my Ingratitude, would certainly make that Life a Burden to me, that at ſo dear a rate you would preſerve as a Bleſſing. But——

Here *Theodora* was going to proceed, when her griev'd Lover, fearing that if ſhe did ſo, ſhe might make ſome Declaration unfavourable to his Wiſhes, thought fit to endeavour to prevent it, by ſaying to her with a profound reſpect. Ah, Madam, do not make your miſtaking Compaſſion more cruel to me, than the ſeverity of the *Romans* themſelves, which we *Chriſtians* juſtly Tax, can poſſibly be. For they will but in a few moments take away that Life, which you would at once protract and render Miſerable. Do not, I beſeech you, Madam, (continues he) think my ſervices Meritorious, becauſe they are paid you in this place, and in your Perſecuted

ſecuted Condition. No, Madam, *Theodora* has Prerogatives enough, to make many leſs unworthy (though not more zealous) than I, ambitious to ſerve her, in what Circumſtances ſoever Providence ſhall think fit to place her. Whatever the *Romans*, that worſhip Fortune and Victory as Goddeſſes, and find their Proſperity the powerfulleſt Argument to ſupport and ſpread their Religion, may think of Sufferings embrac'd for Conſcience ſake: ſure we *Chriſtians*, that adore a Crucified Saviour, who, as he *took upon him the form of a Servant*, was put to Death between two Thieves, as a Slave and a Malefactor too; ought not to let any Perſecutions, or Indignities, leſſen our Veneration or Concern for thoſe that chuſe to Suffer for him, and imitate as well as own him, whatever it coſt them. Nor, Madam, (purſues *Didymus*) needs your having been brought to this place, make you think your ſelf at all diſhonour'd, in the Opinions of

thoſe that can make juſt Eſtimates of things. They look on Sufferers for truth with His undeceiveable Eyes, that, by one of the Pen-men he inſpir'd, having mention'd thoſe Perſons that for Religions ſake were *Impriſon'd, Deſtitute, Tormented, Affronted* forc'd in the Skins of Beaſts, to wander like them in Deſarts, and lodge in Dens; Honours them with this Character and Teſtimony, more glorious than all the Panegyricks of Orators, and Laurels of Conquerors, That *the World was not worthy of them.* And ſuch Judges will think *Venus* an Infamous Courtezan, though the *Romans* adore her in their Temples; and will not think *Theodora* the leſs excellent Perſon, for having been condemn'd on the ſcore of Vertue to a Scandalous place. Honour were a mean thing, and not worthy to have its loſs much fear'd, or regretted; if we could forfeit it without having forſaken Vertue; and much more, if we could be depriv'd of it for having cloſely follow'd

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Her. Nothing can blemiſh true Reputation, that cannot be declin'd without manifeſt injury to Religion, which juſtifies our Acting whatever it impoſes. The Angels themſelves that were ſent to *Sodom*, ſcrupl'd leſs to go even thither, then to diſobey him that made it their duty to do ſo, nor were polluted by entering into that abominable place; and being attempted by the brutiſh Inhabiters of it, carried thence the Angelical Purity wherewith they came thither.

Didymus thought fit to ſay what has been repeated, that he might Conſole ſo chaſt a Virgin as *Theodora*, who had ſtill enjoy'd, as well as merited, a ſpotleſs Reputation; by aſſuring her, that the barbarous Affront ſhe had been expos'd to, for Conſtancy to her Religion, had not, among unbyaſs'd Judges, leſſen'd the high Eſteem her former Life had juſtly given them of her Vertue. But he would not diſcourſe long of

a Subject ſo Nice; that 'twas difficult not only to inſiſt on it, but ſo much as to mention it, without being uneaſie to ſo tender a Modeſty as hers he was ſpeaking to. Upon which account, paſſing on to another Argument, he told her, Theſe things I have mention'd, Madam, to let you ſee, how little I can pretend to merit by the Circumſtances of the duty I pay you; and conſequently, how little you need ſcruple to accept of my further Service, without which my paſt Endeavours will be uſeleſs to us both. And give me leave to own to you, Madam, that 'twas not without much trouble, as well as ſurprize, that I heard the incomparable *Theodora*'s Merit ſo much injur'd, as to have the valuableneſs of my Life put into the Ballance with that of hers, nay, and made to Preponderate. Alas, Madam, there are Legions, that as well as I dare expoſe their Lives to the greateſt hazards, and run greater dangers for ſome deſpicable pay, or a

few worthleſs Leaves, than I do to ſerve my Religion, and the faireſt Profeſſor of it. Every day affords thouſands of ſuch Men as I: Elſe the *Roman* Camps would not be ſo frequently Recruited, and thoſe Numbers that fall in Breaches, or in Battels, would not have their Rooms ſo ambitiouſly ſupplied, by Men that ſee them do ſo. But ſuch Perſons as attain to be both the Ornaments of their Religion, and the Honour of their Sex, muſt be ſo Excellent, and are ſo Rare, that 'tis not every Age that produces ſo much as one of them. Such Exemplary Ladies, do as well improve as enoble the times and places they live in: The reſpect and love Men have for them, makes their good Counſels very perſuaſive; the lovelineſs of their Perſons is ſo diffus'd to their Actions, as, by making Men forward to take them for Examples, adds to to their Vertues, both a great Splendor, and a powerful Influence. That *Theodora* is not only one of that ſmall

Number, but eminent in it; nothing but her Preſence, could keep it from being uneaſie for me to evince. But, Madam, (continues he) though in ſuch Circumſtances as mine, your ſcrupulous Modeſty may keep Men ſilent, yet it ought not to keep them from being Juſt. Your profound Humility may draw a Curtain, that may hide your Vertues from your Eyes; but in the Eyes of others, it cannot but encreaſe their Number, and exceedingly add to their Luſtre. You need not therefore, Madam, (purſues he) ſcruple to receive the Service I aſpire to do you, upon an injurious apprehenſion, that 'tis above Reward; whilſt indeed it pretends not to any at all, except the Satisfaction and Honour, that will be inſeparable from the performance it ſelf. Here *Didymus* paus'd for ſome moments; being ſenſible, how difficult a task he was entering upon: Since 'twas, without prejudicing his Love, to own to his Miſtreſs her ſelf, that he did

did not ſerve her upon the ſcore of That. But however; the ſincerity of his affection, and the great deſire he had to make his perſuaſions prevalent, haſten'd him to prevent her Anſwer, by thus proſecuting his Diſcourſe: 'Tis true, Madam, that *Theodoras* perfections did not miſs in me, to have the operation that they are wont to have, upon thoſe that enjoy the opportunities of conſidering them: and if ſhe had been in a diſtreſs greater than that ſhe is now in, though her Religion had not at all contributed to bring her into it, I ſhould joyfully have expos'd my ſelf, to a greater hazard than I now run, to reſcue her from it. But, Madam, that is not our caſe; for that which now brings me hither, is none of thoſe ſentiments, that if I were poſſeſſor of a Crown, would bring me to lay that and my ſelf at your feet, and think my ſelf more happy in your acceptance of it, than in all the advantages and prerogatives that could belong to it. For, Madam, the reſolution that led me hither

hither, was not inſpir'd by the fair, but by the devout and vertuous *Theodora*. If ſhe had no Charms, but thoſe that cannot be ſeen with bodily Eyes, or if her viſible Beauty were but moderate, or none at all; her Exemplary Piety and Unſhaken Conſtancy, ſhining in ſuch extraordinary Expreſſions of them, as ſhe has this day given, would make me think my ſelf unworthy of Life, if I ſhould ſtick at hazarding it to ſave ſo precious a one, as hers, and what I knew ſhe would far more unwillingly looſe; and thereby do ſome right to Divine Providence, which, by ſo unexampled a reliance on it, was thought in ſome ſort engag'd to anſwer ſo uncommon and entire a Truſt. After what ſhe did for Chriſt, I did not think I could do enough for her, if I did leſs than I have endeavour'd to do. And therefore, Madam, (concludes he) I hope as well as beg, that you will no longer ſcruple to accept of that reſcue, that Providence offers you, by an unmercenary and moſt willing hand, but will

vouchſafe

to make uſe of this Military Garment (at which words *Dydimus* with great reſpect, pointed at His) and allow my endeavours, by procuring your ſafety, to ſecure my happineſs.

To this moving Speech, the fair perſon, that 'twas addreſs'd to, return'd this calm Anſwer.

Though the handſom and obliging things you have been pleas'd to ſay, Generous *Didymus*, have made all the impreſſions on me that they ought to have; yet I muſt, with your pardon, freely tell you, that they naturally afford an inference, quite oppoſite to what you would conclude from them; ſince, by diſcovering more and more of your Gallantry & Friendſhip, they let me ſtill further ſee, how much the World would looſe, by being depriv'd of ſo much Vertue, and how unexcuſable I, above all others, ſhould be, if I ſhould be willingly acceſſory to that loſs. Your too too exceſſive Complements, I muſt not pretend

pretend to anſwer; ſince 'twould be too great a reflection on *Your* Judgment, as well as *Mine*, to think you meant them for any thing more than what I have call'd them. But in anſwer to the ſerious part of your Diſcourſe, I ſhall tell you, that, if I had proceeded in what I was going to ſay to you, when you interrupted me, I had, perhaps, prevented ſome of the things you have ſaid, by freely acquainting you (as I now mean to do) with the ſtate of my Caſe, and the intentions it ſuggeſted to me. When the inhumane *Preſident* (continues *Theodora*) had condemn'd me, either to offer Sacrifice in an Idol Temple, or be led away to this infamous place; I was in ſuch a perplexity and agony as can hardly be conceiv'd, eſpecially by a Perſon that is not of my Sex; for Death it ſelf was thought too mild an evil, to be one of thoſe, among which I was condemn'd to make my choice. On the one ſide; the infamy of this deteſtable place was that which

I could not think on, without the utmoſt horror and indignation: and not only my Sex and Breeding, but even the Dictates of more than one Vertue, (Modeſty and Chaſtity) concurr'd to highten my abhorrence of it. But on the other ſide; I remembred, that I did not vow Obedience to God with any exceptions or reſerves; that I was both a Diſciple and a Worſhipper of a Perſecuted and Affronted Redeemer, for whom (though there were not an infinite Inequality between our Conditions) I could not ſuffer more, than he had already ſuffer'd for my ſake; having not only *endur'd the Croſs*, but *deſpis'd the Shame*, which the *Jews* inſolent Malice, and the *Romans* Barbarous Cuſtom, had annexed to it. And I thought that, perhaps, Providence had led me into this diſtreſs, to give me an Opportunity of ſhewing, that I could do more than die for Chriſt. But I muſt not now trouble you, with the various thoughts that diſtracted my Mind

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on this diſmal occaſion; on which all that I could ſay, to thoſe that rudely preſs'd me to give a poſitive anſwer, was, that of the things they propos'd, I plainly ſaw that both were to be refus'd, and therefore I could make choice of neither. But ſince I would make no Election for my ſelf, their Malice ſoon made one for me, of this deteſtable place. I was ſo confounded, and as it were ſtunn'd, at the firſt ſteps they forc'd me to take towards it, that I ſcarce knew what to think, or what I did; ſave that I remembered, that Idolatry was in the Sacred Books repreſented as a moſt odious, though Spiritual, Fornication; and that Apoſtacy would be my own Crime, whereas the Conſequences of refuſing it, could make me but the Object of anothers: And remembring my ſelf to be a Daughter of him, that againſt Hope believed in Hope, to follow *God's Call*, I did like him, *Obey, not knowing whither I went*: Yet having this Satisfacti-

tisfaction, that I acted according to the Dictates of a well inform'd Conſcience, ſo that, whatever the way might prove, I need not fear to be miſled by cloſely following an Infallible Guide.

Here the Chaſt Virgins words were a little interrupted by the flowing Tears, and the inevitable Diſcompoſure, that were produc'd by the ſad remembrance of the diſtreſs'd Condition ſhe was recounting. But having, as ſoon as ſhe was able ſuppreſs'd, thoſe viſible effects of her vertuous Grief, ſhe thus purſu'd her Diſcourſe.

Revolving theſe and the like thoughts in my Mind, I arriv'd at this infamous place. And being for a while left alone in this Room, to try whether yet I could be brought to change my Mind; the nearer approach of what I was to endure, making it look more hideous to me, than, till then, I thought 'twas poſ-

ſible for any thing to appear, made me preſently think of flying for Refuge to the dark Sanctuary of Death; and by diſpatching my ſelf drown in my yet untainted Blood, both my own diſmal fears, and my Perſecuters brutiſh hopes. But then there came into my mind, what I had been often taught, and, whilſt I was unconcern'd, judg'd rational to believe, of the unlawfulneſs of Killing ones ſelf, upon any account whatſoever. I conſider'd, that God, who made our Love unto our ſelves, the ſtandard of the affection we owe our Neighbour, in forbidding us to deſtroy anothers Life, muſt be ſuppos'd much more to prohibit us that violence againſt our own. And if Fratricide be juſtly liſted amongſt the blackeſt Crimes, becauſe of that Relation the ſlaughter'd perſons have to thoſe that Kill them; how Criminal upon that ſcore muſt be the Murder of our ſelves, where the Relation is not nearer, only becauſe 'tis too near, to be properly any at all? The Sovereign

reign Author and abſolute Lord of our Lives, having thought fit to employ us here in his Service, we cannot, without violating our Duty to him, deſert it until we have perform'd his Errand, which is, to glorifie him by our Lives; till loyalty to his Truth, or his Commands, convince us, that we may better glorifie him by our Deaths. Such Conſiderations as theſe would, I hope, have reſtrain'd me from ending my Life with a Crime; but the thoughts of it were quickly ſuppreſt, by my remembering that in this place, I was deſtitute of Inſtruments to act it with. Wherefore remembring that *Daniel* had been preſerv'd, though not *from* the Lyons Den, yet *in* it; and his three Friends were not deliver'd from the Fiery Furnace, till they had been caſt into it; and having learned by thoſe Examples, that no Succours can come too late, that God deſigns for our Reſcue, I betook my ſelf to Prayer, as the moſt hopeful, as well as the

moſt innocent courſe, I could take; and with an ardency, heighten'd with the extremity of my Diſtreſs, I was beſeeching God, though with the loſs of my Life, to preſerve a Purity, that by his Grace had been hitherto kept unblemiſh'd, when your unexpected entrance brought me a return of thoſe Prayers, I had yet ſcarce utter'd. Judge then, Generous *Didymus* (ſubjoyns *Theodora*) by the Condition I was in, how much I muſt think my ſelf Oblig'd, by ſo brave and ſeaſonable an attempt to deliver me out of it.

To ſerve ſo bright a Vertue, lodg'd in ſo noble a Shrine, I thought, Madam (ſays *Didymus*, Interrupting her) to be as much my Duty, as to have found an Opportunity to do it, is my Happineſs: and if you pleaſe to permit me, as I now hope you will, the Honour and Satisfaction of compleating my Endeavours to deliver you; I ſhall much more value my ſelf, upon the having paid

paid you that Service (though it be more proportionate to my power, than to my desires) than if I had rescued a *Roman* General, or for successful attempts, been made one my self.

When Thanks are purchas'd by Merit, replys *Theodora*, to disclaim a right to them, does not forfeit it, but encrease it; nor need you make me any new Professions, since after the Testimonies you have given me already of your Vertues, and your Friendship, I should make my self unworthy of them, if I doubted of their Reality, or Greatness. Yes, *Didymus*, I believe what you declar'd, of the Disinterestedness of your proceedings in the Rescue of a Person of no greater Merit, than I can pretend to: Since the Circumstances of your Attempt, make it appear too generous to let me suspect, that the Aim of it was other than noble too. And indeed, after what you have done (continues She) it would

ill become me to ſcruple to be further oblig'd by you, and therefore I ſhall venture to make you a Requeſt, as ſoon as I ſhall have acquainted you with the Reaſons, 'tis grounded on.

Didymus being ſurpriz'd at this welcom Declaration, was going with Tranſports to aſſure Her, he could deny her nothing, nor obey her in any thing without Joy; when ſhe prevented him, by thus continuing her Diſcourſe. You know, my Generous Deliverer, that Virgins have ſo great and clear a Right to keep themſelves ſuch, againſt all outward Aſſaults; that Monarchs themſelves (whoſe Force is not to be by force oppos'd, when it tends but to deprive us of our Lives) may be forcibly reſiſted, when they ſtrive to offer Violence to our Chaſtity. Since then, an untainted Purity is a Jewel, that the Poſſeſſors are allowed to preſerve and defend, even by uncommon ways, if others will not ſerve; and

and ſuch as would in other Caſes be unwarrantable: Though I do not, as I lately told you, think it lawful, as many do, to ſecure Virginity by Self-Murder; yet I cannot diſapprove their Opinion, that allow a Virgin in caſe of Extremity, to emplore that Death from anothers hand, that ſhe is forbidden to give her ſelf, with her own; ſince in ſuch a Calamitous Condition, Heaven, by debarring her all other ways of eſcaping from Defilement, ſeems to approve of this. And the Scripture informs us, that though the Prophet *Jonas* held it unlawful to drown himſelf, yet he perſuaded thoſe that Sail'd with him, *Jonah* 1. 12. to caſt him bound into the Sea, when neither they nor he expected he could out-live many Minutes (as indeed 'twas not without a Miracle that he did.) Wherefore, purſues *Theodora*, if you will perfect what you have ſo Obligingly begun, you muſt lend me your Arm and Sword, to free me by a ſpeedy

Death, from miſchiefs much greater than it. The *Romans* will eaſily believe, that my reſiſtance and provocations tranſported you to a Revenge, at which the barbarous uſage I have receiv'd at their hands, makes it unlikely they will be much offended: The grant of my requeſt will not hinder you from being, what you are pleas'd to think a Title, *Theodoras* Deliverer. For, in the eſtimation of Equitable Judges, as well as in Hers, 'twill ſuffice to give you a right to that Title, That you have deliver'd her from her geateſt Calamity and Danger. Nor will the good office I deſire, be inconſiſtent with my obtaining the Honour of Martyrdom: St. *John* the Baptiſt, becauſe his bold Zeal for the Laws of Religion, gave the firſt riſe to thoſe Perſecutions that terminated in his Death, is juſtly reckon'd among Martyrs, though he was privately beheaded in his Priſon, at the ſolicitation of a Curtezan: and if one willingly ſuffers death for the Truth, or the Intereſt of Religion,

there

there needs not a Scaffold or a Stake, and a publick Executioner, to make ſuch a perſon a Martyr. And ſince the Perſecutions that now make havock of the Church, are like to continue long; and ſince I am reſolv'd, by Gods aſſiſtance, never to avoid them, by any either unlawful or unhandſom way: the Eſcape you would perſuade me to, would but for a while delay thoſe Sufferings I ought not to ſhun, and would make them much leſs acceptable, by my having endeavor'd to avoid them; eſpecially by an action ſo mean, if not criminal too, as to conſent to the loſs of an excellent Perſon, that moſt generouſly expos'd himſelf for my ſafety. Deny me not therefore, concludes *Theodora*, with Tears in her Eyes, the laſt requeſt I ſhall ever make you; but by ſheathing your Sword here, (at which words ſhe pointed with bluſhes, at her fair and innocent Breaſt) be pleas'd, by one quick and charitable Stroke, to perfect my deliverance, without making me Stain it with the

Blood of my deliverer ; free us both from eminent Danger, *me* of being Diſhonour'd, and *you* of being Tormented ; and by the ſame Act of Friendſhip, ſecure me the Coronet of Virginity, and procure me the Crown of Martyrdom.

Great was the Surpriſe, and greater was the Trouble, wherewith *Didymus* heard the concluſion of this Diſcourſe : In anſwer to which, as ſoon as his aſtoniſhment would permit him to ſpeak ; Ah Madam, ſays he, what have you ever ſeen in the unfortunate *Didymus*, that could tempt you to make him ſo ſtrange a propoſition. That I, whoſe Errand hither was to venture my Life in your Service, ſhould my ſelf deſtroy the admirable Perſon I came to Reſcue ; and that *Didymus* ſhould imbrue his guilty Hands in *Theodora*'s innocent Blood, to ſave one drop of which, He would gladly ſhed all his own. As your Piety deſerves to be the Pattern of more than one Age, ſo I doubt not,

not, but that in times very remote from ours, your Memory will ſhine as bright, as your Vertue and your Eyes do now; and then, how hideous a Monſter muſt I appear to Poſterity, that will look upon me as one, that could in a trice, paſs from pretending to be your Deliverer, to be really your Murderer; and this for no other Reaſon, than that you were pleas'd to manifeſt a great concern for my Preſervation? And pardon me, Madam, (continues *Didymus*) if I tell you, that your Generoſity makes you forget ſome of your other Vertues, and even of the Dictates of the Religion you have hitherto adorn'd; Since your Commands, if obey'd, would engage me to commit a Crime, and make you your ſelf, more than acceſſory to it. For, Madam, ſince you acknowledg Self-Murder to be unlawful, how can your Commands give me a right to take from you, a Life, that you have not power to diſpoſe of? and what Excuſe can I

have,

have, without ſo much as the pretence of acting under Authority, to deſtroy an Innocent Perſon? For, Madam, ſince I am to declare, why I preſume to do the thing in the World I would leaſt be put upon, to diſobey *Theodora*; give me leave to tell you, that, ſhould I execute what you require, the Action would not be excuſable in either of us. For *as Adam* ſinn'd in doing a forbidden thing, though ſhe that prevail'd with him to do it, *Was firſt in the Tranſgreſſion*; and the *Jewiſh* Prophet was torn in pieces by a Lion, though he did what he was ſeduc'd to, by the perſuaſions of a Prophet: *So* the Scripture clearly condemns *David* of Murder, becauſe he kill'd *Uria*, though not with his own hand, yet with the *Sword of the Children of Ammon*: And the Scripture tells us too, that God plagu'd the Children of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, becauſe, as the Text expreſſes it, *They made the Calf, that* Aaron *made.* And indeed, by whatever Hand innocent

nocent Blood is ſhed, the Guilt of it will light upon the Perſon that procur'd it to be ſpilt. And to this I muſt add, That ſince *Chriſtians* are in ſome caſes, not only permitted, but Exhorted, if not Commanded, *To lay down their Lives for one another:* The high value and concern, I juſtly have for yours, makes me conclude, that this is certainly one of thoſe Caſes, and conſequently, that I may lawfully offer you a Service, which you, perhaps, cannot lawfully refuſe: Since Providence has left you no other Innocent way, than the acceptance of it, to eſcape your preſent danger. And the guilt of Self-Murder may, for ought I know, be Contracted, not only by a poſitive Act, but by an Inflexible refuſal of the proffer'd means of Safety. Pardon me, I beſeech you, Madam, purſues *Didymus*, if the great Concern I have for ſuch a Perſon as *Theodora*, has Extorted from me, a greater plainneſs of Speech, than my profound Reſpect for Her would permit

mit me, upon any other occaſion. And becauſe I perceive that, that which makes you moſt ſcruple to grant my humble Requeſt, is, That your Superlative Generoſity, and what your Humility perſuades you to think Gratitude, make you ſolicitous for the preſervation of a Life, hazarded for your ſake; I muſt aſſure you, Madam, that your Inflexibleneſs will no way make proviſion for my ſafety. For, if I ſhould be Condemn'd by your cruel Commands, to leave you expos'd to the barbarous and defiling rudeneſs of thoſe Brutiſh Satyrs, that impatiently wait without, the regret and ſhame, of having mis'd the Honour of *Theodora*'s Reſcue, will give me far greater Torments, than the *Romans* can, for having effected it. And I muſt add on this Occaſion, Madam, (continues he, not without ſome change of Colour and Voice) that ſome Sentiments (which though I think not this a fit time or place to name, have been much Con-

firm'd

firm'd and Heightned, by what I have this day had opportunity to obſerve) have ſo faſt tied my Happineſs to your Welfare, that the preſence of my Soul is ſcarce more neceſſary to my Life, than your Safety is. Nor fancy, Madam, that the belief I own of the unlawfulneſs of Self-Murder, will ſecure my Life: for there are other ways, to procure Death to him that's weary of Life, than his own Sword, or a draught of Poyſon; ſince Paſſion alone, when rais'd to a competent degree, may do the office of either of thoſe. And ſince Joy it ſelf, though the moſt pleaſing and friendly of the Paſſions, has by its Exceſs, prov'd deſtructive of Mens Lives; why may not Grief, and Shame, and Indignation, which are Paſſions more violent, and very unfriendly to Nature, be able to produce as fatal Effects? And to ſhew you, Madam, (continues *Didymus*) how much reaſon I have to think, that your Condition diſpenſes me from obeying

ing the Dictates of your Generosity, let me.—— But, before *Didymus* had annex'd his Reasons, a Noise made without, gave him a hot Allarm, and made him fear, the patience of some that waited without, would not last very much longer; and therefore addressing himself to *Theodora*, with a Countenance as Petitioning as his Words, and Eyes, in which his Courage could scarce repress the Tears: How long, Madam, says he, will you upon groundless Scruples, neglect an Opportunity, whose Omission will be Irreparable. And how can you justifie to God, the slighting the means His Providence presents you, of easily securing your Safety. Ah, Madam, then (concludes *Didymus*) by one quick and necessary Resolve, regain your Liberty, preserve your Honour, and secure your Life. But if nothing that has relation to your self alone will move you, be pleas'd to reward the Services I have Essay'd to do you, with the implor'd grant

of

of your own Safety; and permit me for this once, rather to Serve you than Obey you. Nor need your generous Solicitude for me, hinder, or retard your Reſolution: The World will not blame a Spotleſs Virgin, for doing what is neceſſary to keep Her ſelf ſuch; nor look upon it as a part of Ingratitude, to grant, to one that has done his beſt to ſerve Her, a Recompence, that he is ſo ambitious of, as to venture his Life to obtain it at her Hands. In ſhort, Madam, for the time allows me not a long Diſcourſe, if your Cruelty will not permit me to prevent your Death; Grief, and other Paſſions, will not allow me to ſurvive it: And then, (ſuppoſing I ſhould fail of making retreat) would it not be a much more happy Fate, that the conſtant *Didymus* ſhould Die, for having ſav'd the matchleſs *Theodora*, than for having loſt Her?

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

TO theſe pathetick Words he thought not fit to ſtay for an anſwer, but retiring to a corner of the room, he diveſted himſelf of his military Coat, and upon his knee, preſented *it* to *Theodora*. She in the mean time, reflecting upon his Arguments, was by their force, convinc'd, that the motion ſhe had made him, of killing her, was grounded upon a dangerous Error. And the noiſe that had been made, in the outward room, alarming her, at leaſt as much as it had done him, let her ſee ſhe had no further time left her to delibera te. And therefore, being prevail'd with, by ſupplications, made in ſo perſuaſive a way, that it appear'd a far leſs cruelty, even towards him, to accept, than finally to refuſe, his offer: She

firſt made her Bluſhes, and her ſilence intimate her conſent, and then declar'd it more expreſly, by raiſing him, and taking out of his hand what he preſented to her. And to his joy (which his foreſight that his ſucceſs would be fatal to him, could not hinder from being very great) ſhe receiv'd from him inſtruction how to put it on, and permitted him (though not without ſtrange diſorder in her mind and looks) to aſſiſt her: For as it was abſolutely neceſſary to do it; ſo he did it with all imaginable care, to diſtreſs ſo nice a Modeſty, as little as was poſſible: And therefore, as ſoon as ever he had done that, with all the reſpect and decency the place and occaſion would by any means permit, all that could be done without him, he left her to do herſelf, withdrawing to a part of the room, whence he could not ſee her. Which Retreat he was induc'd to make, not only out of civility and reſpect, but perchance becauſe the dangers that threat'n internal Chaſtity, have this

peculiar fate, that uſually thoſe perſons are moſt careful to ſhun them, that are the moſt reſolv'd, and the beſt able, to ſurmount them.

As ſoon as the mutual Exchange of their habits had made it decent for them to diſcourſe together, the diſguis'd Virgin, with Cheeks cover'd with Bluſhes, and with looks ſo obliging, that they alone would have recompenc'd *Didymus* for any leſs ſervice than that ſhe now receiv'd, addreſſing herſelf to her Benefactor; If your Reaſons, ſaies ſhe, had not convinc'd me, that I could not without a crime free my ſelf from my wretched Condition by death, and if yet death were not the only way, by which, if I decline your generous proffer, I can poſſibly ſhun, what I far more apprehend than death, diſhonor; I ſhould not leave you in a danger, wherein only your concern for Religion and for me, has engag'd you. But I doubt not the ſame Charity, that put you upon making me your generous

generous proffer, and preſſing me not to decline it, will make you pardon a fault, to which your own Reaſons and Importunity have made you highly acceſſory; eſpecially ſince I know you think a tenderneſs of Honor, and an abhorrence of all Defilement, to be things ſo allowable in a Virgin, as very much extenuate, if not juſtifie, what they require of her. And indeed I ſhall do you but right, when I thankfully acknowledge, that in this whole tranſaction about my Reſcue, your carriage has been ſuch, as would leave me no doubt, if ever I had been ſo unjuſt as to have any, of the purity & diſintereſtedneſs of your intentions, by which I am not a little confirm'd in the opinion I have alwaies had, That Vertue may infpire as Noble and as Hazardous Enterpriſes, as Paſſion can. I know that in this daies work, you aim'd at higher Retributions than could be expected from one in my Condition. But yet I think my ſelf oblig'd to aſſure you, That your Heroick Acts of

Vertue and Friendſhip, have not been exercis'd towards a Perſon inſenſible of them; but that your Merit, and your Favors, have produc'd all the eſteem and other Sentiments, which they ought to produce, in a Perſon, that is not altogether incapable to diſcern and value them. And if the Pray'rs of a diſconſolate Virgin, then ſav'd by you, when all the reſt of the World had abandon'd her, can have any intereſt at the Throne of Grace; they will obtain for you, Bleſſings as great as your generoſity to me has been; and not leſs laſting, than my Senſe of it will be; and you will, during a long protracted life, either be allow'd quietly to enjoy the Glory, your many meritorious Hazards of it have purchas'd, or elſe be enabled to find a happineſs in your very Sufferings, by vertue of thoſe peculiar Conſolations that are reſerv'd for a perſecuted Condition; as anciently Manna was vouchſafed the *Iſraelites*, only whilſt they were Exiles in the Wilderneſs. The quick ſucceſs God has

has been pleas'd to grant my Pray'rs for my own deliverance, lets me not deſpair to find him propitious, to thoſe I ſhall with no leſs ardency put up for yours: But if your Charity ſhould expoſe you to further danger, I ſolemnly promiſe you, that you ſhall find, I have been inſtructed, as well as oblig'd, by your generoſity, and would not have left you expos'd for my ſake, that I might ſhun any danger that had threat'ned but my life.

And now the mournful Virgin, being to bid her accompliſh'd Votary a farewel, which probably enough would prove the laſt; by a manifeſt change in her countenance, and the tone of her voice, and by the multitude of tears that fell from her fair Eyes, convinc'd him no leſs of the trouble ſhe was in upon his account, than any verbal expreſſions could do it; though ſhe ſaid to him, in a moſt obliging manner, Farewel my Generous Deliverer; and may

that God, who ſees with what reluctancy I conſent to your danger, free you happily from it, and richly recompenſe that noble Charity that led you into it. I hope we ſhall yet ſee one another again upon Earth. I am confident we ſhall meet joyfully in Heaven; by which I muſt confeſs my ſelf very highly favour'd, not only in my Deliverance, but in the inſtrument of it; ſince God makes me not beholden for my Reſcue to any common perſon, but is pleas'd ſo to order it, that I receive the greateſt of earthly Benefits, from the moſt Generous of men.

Madam, replies the much troubled *Didymus*, your own unequal'd perfections, and the operation they have had on me, make me ſo much yours, that your wiſhing me happy, does more towards the making me ſo, than your humility will allow you to be aware of. You have too much Merit, Madam, to let the Services I have paid you, have a title to any; and what I have had the happineſs

pineſs to perform, is but what was every brave man in *Antioch*'s duty to endeavor. But if your Goodneſs will needs make you think, that my poor Services ſhould have another (for they can ſcarce have a greater) recompence, than you have already given them, by ſuffering them to contribute to your ſafety; and if you will vouchſafe to allow the memory of him that did them, a room in your thoughts, (which is the happieſt Station it can aſpire to upon earth:) I humbly beg your faithful ſervants Image may be look'd on without any troubleſom degree of pity; ſince his condition will then need none, and the Idea would very much miſrepreſent the Original, if *it* ſhould diſquiet her, whom *he* never approach'd, but to ſerve Her. 'Tis ſuitable, Madam, to this frame of mind, that for *Theodoras* ſake I muſt now deny my ſelf ſo much, as to haſten her departure, leaſt ſome croſs accident ſhould prevent it: At which words, looking on her with a countenance that all his

Courage could not keep from a diſcernable Change: Farewel, ſaid he, incomparable *Theodora*, may you continue long the Ornament and the Pattern of your Sex: And ſince we ſee that ſome Fruits may be as well preſerv'd in Honey, as others in Brine and Vinegar, may the height of your Vertue be kept up, but the objects of it ſo chang'd, that by a ſettled Proſperity you may henceforth haveoccaſion to exerciſe your moderation and your gratitude, inſtead of your courage and your patience. Once more Farewel, concludes he, unequal'd *Theodora*; and may you live but with as much Contentment, as if I ſuffer for you, I ſhall die with Satisfaction.

Though theſe moving Expreſſions, and the accent wherewith they were deliver'd, did very ſenſibly touch a perſon ſo well natur'd and grateful as *Theodora*; yet ſhe thought the fitteſt return ſhe could then make to her Lover's diſcourſe, was, preſently

to

to follow the advice he was ſo earneſt to have her ſpeedily embrace. And therefore, bidding him farewel only by a look, wherein high degrees of ſorrow and gratitude were plainly mingled; ſhe immediately diſpos'd herſelf to quit that diſmal place: Which thenafforded a noble inſtance, how little a great mind can be hindred from diſcloſing it ſelf to be ſo, by the Stage 'tis oblig'd to act upon. For whilſt in divers of the ſtately Temples of *Antioch*, Whores, (ſuch as *Venus* and *Flora*,) and Raviſhers, and Adulterers, (ſuch as *Jupiter* and *Mars*) were ſolemnly ador'd; in an infamous Scene, dedicated to publick Luſt and Violence; the ſtricteſt Chaſtity was exercis'd, and Martyrdom it ſelf was contended for.

Having once ventur'd into the outward room, That Providence, to which ſhe had in ſuch diſcouraging Circumſtances truſted her Virgin Purity, would not leave the reſcue of it, incompleat; but whilſt the waiting

ing Ruffians were eagerly contending, who ſhould ſucceed the perſon they took by the Habit to be *Didymus*, (and whoſe face they did not wonder to ſee muffled, preſently after ſo ſavage an action as they ſuppos'd him to have committed) brought her ſafely out of that infamous Place. Whence, by the leaſt frequented Paſſages ſhe knew, ſhe was was quickly convey'd to the houſe of her dear Friend *Irene*, which happen'd to be nearer than her own.

There to avoid ſuſpicion, ſome of her friends and relations were met together, to lament her Captivity, and join in Prayer to him that alone could deliver her, to be directed by God how they might (if it were poſſible) contribute to her reſcue. But, though their Prayers were probably made with more zeal than hope, they were not a little alarm'd, when looking out to ſee who knock'd at the door, they ſaw, as they thought, a Soldier, who would not have been quickly

quickly let in, if *Irene* had not preſum'd it to be *Didymus*, who was coming to offer his Service to his captivated Miſtreſs. But 'tis not eaſie to expreſs the wonder and the joy, with which they ſoon diſcover'd that this was not *Theodoras* Lover, but herſelf; whoſe Beauty and her military Dreſs, would have made her, had the *Roman* Guards diſcover'd her, paſs for their *Pallas*. Nor was ſuch a Habit, though improper for a Virgin, unſuitable to a Great, as well as Chaſt Conqueror.

But though her preſence never needed the endearment of a Surpriſe, yet the unexpectedneſs of it at that time and place, added to the Tranſports it produc'd; eſpecially in *Irene*: Who after a thouſand gratulations and careſſes, at length begg'd in the name of the impatient Company, to know how the bleſſing they all receiv'd in her freedom, was procur'd. To which reaſonable requeſt ſhe anſwer'd, by making a ſhort but faithful Narrative,

rative, of what had occur'd ſince the time ſhe was cited before the Preſident, till ſhe came to take Sanctuary among them; piouſly concluding, that, as what ſhe had done not misbecoming a Chriſtian, was altogether by the aſſiſtance of Divine Grace, ſo the ſuccour ſhe receiv'd to bring her out of danger was by the Conduct of Divine Providence, which in her delivery made uſe of the high vertue and generoſity of *Didymus*. This Relation made the Company firſt return Thanks and Praiſes to the Divine Goodneſs, which were followed by the celebrations of the happy Inſtrument of it: every one, as it were by turns, endeavouring to vye, who ſhould moſt commend ſo venturous & diſintereſſed a Lover. Nor perhaps did *Theodora* her ſelf, inwardly diſſent from that gratefull company. For, though her modeſty and reſervedneſs kept her from declaring her Sentiments, as others did theirs; yet perhaps that was becauſe She thought, that having given a Candid account

of

of his deportment, her Narrative had made her praiſes needleſs, the Hiſtory it ſelf being indeed a Panegyric.

After the Companies curioſity was ſomewhat ſatisfied by what *Theodora* had told them, and both *Irene* and ſhe had made a requeſt to a Gentleman that knew *Dydimus* well, to endeavour to bring them ſpeedy notice of what had happened to him, or was like to befall him: The two excellent Ladies retir'd to the apartment of *Irene*. There the pious *Theodora*, having devoutly paid her ſolemn Thanks and Praiſe, for her almoſt miraculous Deliverance, to the Divine Author of it; ſhe was accommodated by her Friend, with Cloaths befitting her Sex. Nor was it difficult for *Irene*, (though on ſo ſudden an occaſion) to furniſh her with a Habit ſhe liked for beſides, that, a Perſon ſo ſhap'd and faſhioned as *Theodora*, could make almoſt any dreſs Graceful; ſhe us'd to pity the mean vanity of thoſe Ladies, that could be either

Ambitious

Ambitious or Proud of what they muſt owe to a Taylor or a Dreſſer, and affected to be taken notice of, not ſo much for what they are, as for what they wear: And therefore, tho' ſhe did not ſcrupulouſly decline faſhionable Clothes becauſe they were ſo; yet all the Ornaments that paſs'd the limits of the modeſteſt Decency, ſhe alwayes as little valu'd, as ſhe needed them.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

BEfore this rare Couple return'd to the reſt of the Company, *Irenes* kindneſs for *Didymus* made her think, ſhe ought not to looſe this opportunity, of doing good offices to her abſent Friend. And therefore having (as ſhe eaſily might)brought the diſcourſe to fall upon his late performances; I hope, Madam, ſayes ſhe to *Theodora*, you are now ſatisfi'd, that the Character I gave you of the greatneſs of my Couſins Vertue, and the Ardency of his Flame, was dictated more by his Merit than my Friendſhip. I were very ungrateful, replies *Theodora*, if I did not willingly acknowledge his Generoſity to be altogether extraordinary, and that, as he could not oblige me more highly than he has done, ſo it was not poſ-

ſible

ſible that he ſhould do it more handſomly.

I know, Madam, ſaith *Irene*, that *Theodora* may freely chooſe among all the illuſtrious Youth of *Antioch*, what perſon ſhe would pleaſe to make happy: And, without conſidering her leſs obvious, though more admirable, Perfections; far leſs Beauty than ſhe is Miſtreſs of, has in our times, given the Poſſeſſors a ſhare in the Imperial Throne, and perhaps too, plac'd them upon the *Roman* Altars. But yet, continues ſhe, ſince I have the honour to know you too well, not to be confident, that you value Piety and Vertue, and a Flame regulated and excited by them, above thoſe outward advantages which weaker Spirits are influenc'd by; I think I may preſume to ſay; that I know not any perſon in *Antioch*, to whom the fair *Theodora* may with leſs Condeſcenſion vouchſafe a Share in her Favour, than to him, that had the happineſs to give her ſo clear a proof, of the ardency, the purity, and the diſintereſtedneſs of his Flame. If

If I had not, reply's *Theodora* with a ſomewhat diſſatisfy'd look, been much ſurpriſed at the begining of your Diſcourſe; I had immediately ſtop'd youthere: And lamented my infelicity, that *Irene*, whom I thought my ſelf happy in having for my Friend, allows her ſelf what is ſo repugnant to true friendſhip, as flattery is. I could, continues *Theodora* without pauſing for fear of being prevented; eaſily, and with the approbation of many of the beſt Judges in *Antioch*, return the fair *Irene* her own Complements, if I thought fit to imitate what I cannot approve. And to Speak ſeriouſly, continues She, neither you nor I, nor any of our Sex, ought to think Skin-deep Beauty as great a Bleſſing, as 'tis an applauded one. For without our fault, and in Spight of our care to preſerve it, a Thouſand accidents may, and time certainly will, ruine the Loveliеſt Faces; and perhaps to that degree, as not in the remains to leave it credible that ever they were

hanſom. 'Tis true that thoſe vain Men, whoſe Paſſion maſters their reaſon, are wont (for the moſt part with deſigns we ought not to be proud of) to Speak extravagant things, and too often even prophane Ones, of the beauties they profeſs to adore. But though they really meant (which they very ſeldom do) all they ſay, in praiſe of thoſe they repreſent as Goddeſſes; yet I think a conſidering perſon will ſcarce be very proud of receiving that Title, from thoſe who can think that a few Colours and Features luckily mingled, are ſufficient to make a Deity. An uncommon degree of Beauty, adds ſhe, expoſes the owner to extraordinary troubles, from the Envy of thoſe that want it, and the Importunities of thoſe that court it. And, without as much caution and watchfulneſs as turn it into a trouble, it too often proves a ſtrong Temptation to thoſe that admire it, and a dangerous Snare to thoſe that poſſeſs it. And if I had

had the vanity to think, what you would perſuade me to believe, I ſhould yet take Beauty in a woman, to be like a rich Perfume; which though it be a thing very grateful in moſt companies, and perhaps (eſpecially at firſt) very delightful to the wearer, yet does often diſcompoſe, not only ſtrangers ſhe chances to converſe with, but the beſt Friend ſhe has; and not ſeldom does miſchief even to herſelf, by diſordering her head, or caſting her into fits of the mother. I beg your pardon, Dear Madam, ſays the fair *Irene*, with ſomewhat of ſadneſs in her looks, that whilſt I had ſo much Beauty in my eye and thoughts, I forgot, that it was in *Theodora* accompany'd with a far greater and ſcrupulous Humility; and I did not apprehend that I could be thought guilty of Flattery, ſo near to a witneſs (at which words ſhe pointed to a Looking-Glaſs, that hung up in the Room) ready to juſtifie more than I had occaſion to ſay. I will-

ingly acknowledge with you, that the amiableneſs diſcoverable by the Eyes of every gazer, is a thing far leſs deſirable than deſired: And procures the poſſeſſors more praiſe, than it brings them happineſs. And for my part, adds ſhe, if I had the weakneſs to beleive my ſelf Miſtreſs of what the folly of ſome has made them flatter me with, yet I ſhould not be over much pleas'd with a Quality, that would add to thoſe harms my frailty makes me guilty of, thoſe which I never intended; and makes Ladies ſo miſchievous, to thoſe that moſt love them, that even when they do not rob men of their Innocency, they deprive them of their Quiet. I confeſs therefore, Madam, (continues *Irene*) that it was injurious to inſiſt upon the praiſes of a face, when, how little ſoever it can be Match'd in its own kind, 'tis accompanied with Several Beauties of a much nobler kind. But that which induc'd me to ſpeak as I did, was, to let the fair *Theodora* ſee, that I was juſtly ſenſible

ſible, how great a thing I begg'd for my Friend; when I implor'd for him an intereſt in Her Favour. And I do the leſs deſpair of the effects of your Goodneſs, both to him and me, becauſe I beg them for an abſent friend, who is not in a condition to ſpeak for himſelf; and who, as I perceiv'd by the obliging Relation you were pleas'd to make, of his Carriage towards you, declin'd making you any requeſt, when his Services were ſo happy as not to be uſeleſs to you. His ſilence, anſwers *Theodora*, in ſuch circumſtances, had more effect on me, than his paſſionateſt ſolicitations would have produc'd. But the thing, I preſume, you aim at, for him, is of that moment to me, that I cannot think fit to diſcourſe of it, till we can do ſo with more calmneſs and leiſure, than we can at this time expect. You know, *Irene*, that I have ſtill look'd upon Marriage as one of the moſt important Actions of Life: And,

though I think they have too mean a notion of Happineſs and Miſery, who imagine, that one Creature can make either of them the portion of another; yet I think, that not only the dictates of diſcretion, but thoſe of ſincerity and chaſtity, oblige a woman to have a great care, not to enter into ſo near and indiſſoluble a Relation, upon any grounds, that are not like to laſt as long as it, (and conſequently, as our lives:) And therefore, a woman that reſolves to be what ſhe ſhould be, when a wife, ought to deliberate much upon a Choice ſhe can probably make but once; and not needleſly venture to embarque herſelf on a Sea ſo infamous for frequent Shipwracks, only becauſe ſhe is offer'd a fine Ship to make the long Voyage with. But, continues the baſhful Virgin, (not without ſome little diſorder in her looks) ſince my dear *Irene* will needs make uſe of the priviledge ſhe has, to know more of my thoughts than I would diſcloſe to any other perſon

perſon in the world; our friendſhip prevails with me to tell her, that if I were altogether at my own diſpoſal, and could be induc'd to admit ſuch a change of condition, as I have alwayes been averſe from; I ſhould be more influenc'd in my choice by the ſhining Vertues and Extraordinary Services of *Didymus*, than by all the Advantages that either Titles, or Riches, or Dignities, could give any of his Rivals. But, my Dear *Irene*, (adds ſhe) we live in ſuch times, and I, for my own particular, am beſet with ſuch Circumſtances; that 'twere not only very unreaſonable, but wildly extravagant, for me to encreaſe my Commerce with the World.

For, *Irene*, continues ſhe, in my opinion, a *Chriſtian* does not deſerve to be happy, and a true one cannot think he is happy, whilſt the Church of Chriſt is miſerable: At leaſt, as far as outward Calamities can make it. When I ſee the Em-

pire over-run with Idolaters and Perſecutors; when I ſee Raviſhers and Whores, ador'd in ſtately Temples, and the only Worſhippers of the True God driven into Corners, and purſu'd even thither; when I ſee ſuch as God is pleas'd to declare *the World not to be worthy of*, treated by men as perſons not worthy to live in the World; but daily expell'd out of it, with ignominy and torments: When I ſay, (adds *Theodora*, with tears in her Eyes,) I conſider the general Deſolation of the Church, and that I am like and willing to be, not a meer Spectator, but a ſuffering Actor, in this Tragedy; I cannot, in the midſt of Her Sighs and Groans, liſten to the unſeaſonable Complements of a Lover, think of reliſhing any Contentment, that deſcends not from a place too high for Perſecution to reach. In theſe Sentiments, ſubjoins ſhe, I am warranted, by no leſs Authority that than of an Apoſtle;

Heb. 11. 38.

poſtle; who, though not unfavourable to the Marriage State, diſadviſes thoſe women that are free, from entering into it, at leaſt during the preſent diſtreſs; though that were in his time, very much inferiour to thoſe ſtraits we are now reduc'd to. Yet, Madam, ſayes *Irene*, thoſe expreſſions of Friendſhip, that a Conjugal Relation invites, are not only made allowable by it, but commendable, and are as real duties of Piety, and Vertue, as divers of the more abſtracted Exerciſes of Religion. I do not contradict that, replies *Theodora*, but look upon that very thing, as a diſſwaſive, from the ſtate of life, you would recommend. For, if I could think fit, to enter into it, it ſhould be with a reſolution, to do all that becomes me in it. And in ſuch a calamitous Time as we live in, I could not do that, without coming far more than I now am, within the worlds reach; ſince I ſhould think it my duty, and perhaps be engag'd upon

upon another account, to have ſuch apprehenſions for a near friends danger, as my own would be uncapable of giving me. And the Contentment I now enjoy, in a diſpoſition to quit the world without regret, would be deſtroy'd, or at leaſt allay'd, by an uneaſineſs to part with, what duty and inclination would, perhaps, too much faſten me to. Here *Irene* was going to interrupt her by an anſwer; when her fair friend prevented her, by thus continuing her diſcourſe: And to me it ſeems very conſiderable, that the Apoſtle I lately mentiond, clearly enough intimates, that to perſevere in a Virgin-State, in times of Perſecution, gives thoſe that prefer it, the great advantage of ſerving God more undiſtractedly; and conſequently of being more entirely and uninterruptedly imploy'd, in the direct Contemplation and Services, of an Object ſo Sublime, that our mind cannot divert to another, without ſtooping to an inferiour one.

And

And though it be true, that the duties of a Relation, may rightfully challenge a part of an engag'd persons time and care; yet I see not why one that has no need, should enter into a Relation, that would make those distracting Duties necessary.

Though *Irene* found it scarce possible to answer *Theodoras* Reasons, yet her kindness to her absent friend, made her unwilling to lose the opportunity their privacy gave her, to make one attempt more in his favour: Which she did, by saying to his excellent Mistress; But shall not the as faithful as unhappy *Didymus*, be allow'd to hope, *that* if once those dismal Clouds that pour down show'rs of Blood, shall be happily blown over, he may have a particular share in the publick joy and Tranquility; *that* his Sufferings shal end with the Persecutions of the Church; *that* those fatal resolutions, that are so destructive to his

his happineſs, may ceaſe with their occaſion; *that Theodoras* Severity will not out live the *Roman* Cruelty; and *that* her heart will not be the laſt place, where the Emperours cruel Edicts will continue to have a fatal Operation.

Alas *Irene*, ſays *Theodora*, ſomewhat troubled to be ſo preſs'd; how unſeaſonably do you now diſcourſe to me, about things relating to a time, to which very probably my life will never reach. For, Subjoines She, to deal clearly with you; I am ſo far from flattering my ſelf, with an Expectation of thoſe Halcyon dayes I wiſh you may live to ſee, that I ſhall not be ſurpriz'd, if this day prove the laſt I ſhall Spend in this World. And if before Night, I paſs thence into another; where the frailty and Mortality, upon which Marriage was founded, ceaſing, that condition of Life will have no Place; but will be Succeded by an Angelical State, where our Friendſhip

Friendſhips, as well as our Perſons, will be Transfigur'd, and made Incomparably more Perfect than they can be here below.

CHAP. V.

Theodora had Scarce made an end of ſaying this, when her Converſation with her fair Friend was Interrupted, by the notice that was given them of, the arrival of a Gentleman of their Religion, who brought ſome News that it Concern'd them to know. This advertiſement ſoon brought back theſe two Excellent Ladies to the reſt of the Company; to which this Intelligent and Inquiſitive Perſon was going to give an account, which the Sadnes of his Looks prepar'd them to find an unwelcom one. However; they liſten'd to him with great

great attention, as well as Concern: and He, after a ſhort Preamble, briefly accquainted them with ſome particulars, that will hereafter be more fully related. But that which he himſelf ſeem'd moſt mov'd at the mention of, and which moſt affected his hearers, was this; That when the Preſident had notice of *Theodora's* eſcape, though there wanted not ſome Generous Men, that endeavour'd by ſeverall Arguments to diſwade him from proſecuting her any further; Yet he was ſo far from being prevail'd with, to Comply with ſo reaſonable a motion, that he ſolemnly Proteſted, that if ever he could get this Fugitive (as he was pleas'd to call, that admirable Perſon) once more into his power, he would never ſtrive again to reclaim her by the fear of Infamy, (a thing which, ſaid he, I perceiv'd She deſpis'd) but by the terrour of death; Suppoſing, as he added, that She would not fly from an Altar, to a Scaffold,

or a

a Stake; and resolving, in case She were inflexible, to Sacrifice her to the indignation of those Incens'd Deity's, She had so Obstinately provok'd.

The former part of this Discourse, which related to *Didymus*, his Excellent Mistress heard not, with out such inward Commotions, that in Spight of the Calmness and reservedness of her temper, they clearly enough disclos'd themselves in her face, by several Changes of Colour, which those that had lately admir'd the greatness of her Courage, could not but ascribe to that of her concern for her distressed Lover. But when the Relator had concluded that part of his Narrative, that directly regarded her self, tho' it fill'd all the Auditors with grief and terrour, *Theodora* seem'd to have gain'd a new life; Since in her looks, the visible tokens of a deep sadness, were succeeded by no less manifest Signs of joy.

While

While the reſt of thoſe to whom the Melancholy account was given, were entertaining one another with the reflections they made upon it; *Irene* having drawn her fair friend aſide, was impatient to learn the cauſe of that pleaſing change, ſhe had obſerv'd in her looks.

Whilſt, anſwers *Theodora*, I was liſtening to the report of the Eminent Danger, which the Generous *Didymus* was Expos'd to for my Sake, I could not but be Extreamly Troubled, to find my Self reſtrain'd from attempting his Reſcue, by the manifeſs. Danger, of being by the Barbarous Preſident ſent back to the infamous place, whence your vertuous friend had ventur'd ſo much to free me: But now that the Judge, by a Solemn Declaration, has tyed up his own hands from tempting me, by ſo juſtifiable a fear as that of Infamy; 'twas no wonder, my Looks diſclos'd ſome Tokens of a joy, grounded upon ſo welcom

welcom an opportunity to exercise my Gratitude Without hazarding my Honour.

What? *Theodora!* saith *Irene*, as it were Thunder-struck with this unexpected answer; do you put *so* small a value upon that wonderful Deliverance, that scarce an hour ago you did so devoutly and deservedly give Thanks for, *that* you will so soon rush into greater dangers, than those that requir'd little less than a miracle to rescue you from them?

I hope, replies calmly *Theodora*, that I shall never forget, nor without a deep sense remember, the admirable rescue you speak of. But I take the most gracious part of that Deliverance, to consist in my being rescu'd from Dishonour; and think it would be much less obliging than it is, if it debar'd me from the surest and directest ways to Glory; and if, to preserve my external Purity, it did

condemn me to Ingratitude, towards the meritorious Inſtrument of that Preſervation.

Our Lives, ſaith *Irene*, being truſted to us, as well as vouchſaf'd us, by God; are not ſo much at our own diſpoſal, that 'tis allowable for us to part with them, as we think fit: And 'tis poſſible for us to abandon them, not only when we do directly and violently rid our ſelves of them, but when we do thoſe things, whoſe natural Conſequence is an untimely Death.

I believe with you, ſaith *Theodora*, that our Lives are to be reckon'd among thoſe Goods that we are entruſted with, rather as Stewards than unaccountable Proprietors; and acknowledge too, that certain actions, that do not directly, may yet criminally, tend to their deſtruction. But I do not think the care of our Lives is committed to us, as that of our Souls

is,

is, with ſo indiſpenſable an obligation to keep them; that it can never upon any terms whatſoever, be lawfulfor us to looſe them. For, I think Life to be a Talent, which is indeed to be carefully husbanded and preſerv'd; but is committed to us, not ſo much to keep ſafe, as to negotiate with; and is entruſted to us in order to a condition better than it ſelf. And therefore, ifReligion, or Vertue, require any thing at our hands, which cannot be perform'd without endangering, or even looſing our Lives, in that caſe to venture them,or to part with them, is a duty; and conſequently at leaſt a juſtifiable action: And this purſues *Theodora*, I take to be my caſe; who am ſummon'd by Faithfulneſs to a juſt Promiſe, and by Gratitude to an extraordinary Benefactor, to endeavour the ſaving of an innocent Perſon, who is accus'd on my account, and has brought himſelf into a great danger, only for having moſt obliging-

ly Reſcu'd me from a greater.

But what, replies *Irene*, if the attempt you deſign, is far more likely to deſtroy you, than to ſave *Didymus*? For the barbarous Judge, is ſo much an Enemy to all Chriſtians, as ſuch, and ſo much incens'd againſt You, for your Eſcape, and Him for having been the Author of it; that the Cruelty of that inexorable man, will make him gladly deſtroy you both, as far as humane pow'r and rage can do it. And ſo, without preſerving to the Church of *Antioch*, one of its Ornaments, you will deprive it of another, and a greater; by denying it the Influence it might receive, by ſo laſting and Exemplary a Vertue, as may juſtly be expected in a perſon ſo pious, and ſo young, as *Theodora*.

The Experience, anſwers *Theodora*, that this very day has afforded me, forbids me to diſtruſt Divine Providence;

Providence; and keeps me from deſpairing to find my endeavors to reſcue your Kinſman, ſuccesful; if the Moſt Wiſe and Good, as well as Abſolute Diſpoſer, of Events, ſhall not think it leſs our advantage, to be repriev'd than crown'd. Without preſuming therefore, to foreſee Events, 'tis my part to do what God has vouchſafed to put into my power: and 'tis not my duty to reſcue *Didymus*, but it is to attempt it; and thereby acquit my ſelf as far as I am able, of what I owe to my promiſe, and my gratitude. If I had the vanity to think, adds ſhe, that in a perſon of my Sex and Frailties, ſuch a Church as that of *Antioch*, could be much concern'd; I ſhould think too, that the attempt I am about to make, were the beſt way to make my life ſomewhat ſignificant. For, whereas our heathen Adverſaries are ſo blinded with Prejudices, that they look upon all we do or ſuffer for Chriſtianity, as the effects of a kind of Superſti-

tious Frenzy, that ſeizes us, and tranſports us, whenever the Articles of our Faith are contended for: My expoſing my ſelf to their fury, rather than be wanting to the dictates of Gratitude, which they, as well as we, look on as a Moral Vertue, may help to convince them, that our love to Vertue is general, and more diſintereſted, than they thought it: Since Chriſtians can venture and part with their Lives, as well to ſhun Ingratitude, as to reſiſt Idolatry.

This gratitude, (replies *Irene*) whoſe exceſs gives you and us, ſo much trouble, is a relative thing; and Benefits or Services receiv'd, ought to be requited by Actions, that are acceptable to thoſe, they are deſign'd to gratify; but ſure, not by ſuch, as we know will be unwelcome to them. And therefore, (continues ſhe) the faithfuleſt, and moſt diſintereſted of your Servants, will be far more unhappy, than

than the *Roman* Cruelty can make him, *if* what he has done, doth not convince you, that he can never look upon any thing, as a favour or retribution to him, that ſhall deſtroy, or ſo much as endanger, his adored Miſtreſs.

I were very unworthy, (rejoins *Theodora*) if I did not think *Didymus* capable of the higheſt Sentiments that generoſity and friendſhip can inſpire. But he is too juſt, to forbid thoſe he loves, to aſpire to ſome ſhare of thoſe noble Quality's; upon whoſe account, I am to conſider, not ſo much what his Vertue will reliſh, as what his condition requires; there being a ſort of Debts, to which mine to him belong, that ought to be the more carefully paid, the more frankly they are remitted.

The ſorrowful *Irene*, being exceeding troubled, to ſee her endeavours unſucceſsful, on an occaſion, upon which

which of all others, ſhe moſt wiſh'd to find them prevalent, was prompted by her grief, to bring her Eyes to the aſſiſtance of her Tongue; and weeping, ſaid to her inflexible Miſtreſs; If, Madam, you will not have any compaſſion for the excellent *Theodora*, at leaſt take ſome pity upon the diſconſolate *Irene*; and if her *Arguments* cannot move you, be not at leaſt inexorable to her *Fears*. You have, (continues ſhe) vouchſaf'd me the honour of your friendſhip, and the happineſs of your converſation; and by both theſe bleſſings, have given me ſo much eſteem and kindneſs, for ſo great a Benefactor, that if you deny me, what I now implore, you will turn the nobleſt parts of my happineſs upon Earth, into inſtruments of my Infelicity; ſince, in a World depriv'd of *Theodora*, the deſolate *Irene*, will Languiſh, rather than Live, if ſhe ſhould be able to ſurvive ſo great a Loſs.

Theodora,

Theodora, whoſe Reſolution and good Nature were both of them extraordinary, though ſhe had courage enough to ſupport calmly her own perſonal Sufferings, yet ſhe had tenderneſs enough to be very ſenſible of thoſe of her Friends. And the moving expreſſions of the ſorrowful *Irene*, together with the Tears that accompany'd them, made ſuch an impreſſion on her, that though, having foreſeen this Storm, it did not ſurprize her, yet it did much diſtreſs her, and let her; ſee, how many uneaſie Victories ſhe was to gain, before ſhe could triumphantly compleat that days work. And though after a ſhort, but ſharp, Conflict, between her kindneſs and her Reſolution, the latter of them prevail'd, yet, 'twas not without ſome Reluctancy and Commotion, that ſhe was able to return this Anſwer. Ah, dear *Irene*, do not exerciſe ſo much Cruelty your ſelf, whilſt you reproach me for being Cruel; and do not add to

the great affliction of parting with ſuch a Friend as *Irene*, that of ſeeing her ſo much troubled on my account, and of ſeeing myſelf neceſſitated to the uneaſie Task of denying a Requeſt of hers. If what I owe to my Religion, and to your generous Couſin, would ſuffer me upon any terms, to alter the Reſolves it prompted me to; the delaration of your deſire to have me do it, would have made all the Arguments you employ'd to perſwade me to it, unneceſſary. 'Tis true, that among Vertuous Friends, kindneſs may challenge much, but not to the prejudice of Conſcience and Reputation. I hope our Friendſhip is not, and am ſure it ought not to be, barely a mutual fondneſs of two young Virgins; but that vertue had a gteater ſhare in making and continuing it, than Sympathy and Inclination had. And 'tis but juſt, that a friendſhip, grounded chiefly upon Vertue, ſhould be govern'd and regulated by it. Per-

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Permit me therefore (purſues ſhe) with that freedom and plainneſs, that our Friendſhip allows, to put you in mind, that in the ſtraits wherein Providence has now placed us, it calls upon us to conſider, not only that we are *Friends*, but, that we are *Chriſtians* too; who ought in reaſon, as well for our departing as our departed Friends, to liſten to the Apoſtle of us *Gentiles*, who forbids us, upon the removal of thoſe we love, to give *up our ſelves to Sorrow, as thoſe that have no hope.* Indeed, if we were *Epicureans*, that believe the Soul as mortal, as the Body; or ſuch other Pagans, as bury in the Graves of their Friends, the hopes, or at leaſt the confidence, of meeting them again: we could ſcarce too bitterly deplore a Seperation, that would certainly, or at leaſt for ought we knew, prove an Eternal one. But having, through the goodneſs of God been embracers of the Goſpel, and enabled, though

1 *Theſs* 4. 13.

but

but imperfectly, yet ſincerely, to live according to its Dictates, and be ready to die for its defence; the ſame Grace may keep us from fearing, that the time of our ſeparation will be laſting enough, to bear any conſiderable proportion to that Eternity, which will be allow'd us to enjoy each others Company in. And give me leave to tell you, *Irene*, that I cannot rejoice at any expreſſions, even of your kindneſs, that are injurious to your Piety, and bring your love of me, into a competition with that, which ought to be as unparrallel'd as its Object is. They love a Creature too much, that think it too good to be parted with, for the Creators ſervice. 'Tis a high injury to him, to think we can loſe any thing for him, that he cannot make us a rich amends for. And I muſt not conceal my Opinion, that a Chriſtian diſparages both himſelf and his profeſſion, if he complains, that any loſs can make him unhappy, while he poſſeſſes the favour

favour of God. Wherefore, my deareſt *Irene*, (concludes She) let your Friendſhip alleviate *my* Grief, by ſhewing me how handſomly you bear *your own*; and prefer, I beſeech you, upon this ſad occaſion, the Exerciſe of the more *generous*, to That of the more *tender*, Effects of Kindneſs.

Alas, Madam, ſays the diſtreſs'd *Irene*, all the fine things you ſay to comfort me, produce in me, an Effect quite contrary to that you deſign by them; ſince they do but the more diſcover the Excellency and Kindneſs of the incomparable Perſon I am going to be depriv'd of; after whoſe company, I ſhall find that of the reſt of the World, too inſipid, ſo much as to divert me: and therefore, if you will not grant me the Bleſſing of Living with you, at leaſt do not deny me the ſatisfaction of Dying with you. For, though Martyrdom be very formidable to a frail Woman, yet Hea-

Heaven is more desirable to a Christian; and I shall not fear to take a Scaffold or a Stake in my way, when I travel to such a Place, as That, in such Company as yours.

You know, (replies *Theodora*) as well I, that our Religion commands us to suffer Martyrdom, when we are oblig'd to do it; but forbids us to thrust ourselves unnecessarily upon so fatal and difficult a work: The Apostles themselves, whose peculiar Office it was, to be the Heralds and Champions of the Gospel, were commanded, when they were persecuted in one City, to fly into another; and accordingly one of the most couragious of them, to avoid needless and unseasonable dangers, fled to *Jerusalem* from *Damascus*; though to do so, He was fain to be let down from the wall of this Place in a Basket. And 'tis but reasonable, we should not, without a manifest Call of Providence

Act. 19. 25.

vidence, venture upon a Conflict, in which we do ſo much depend upon extraordinary Aſſiſtances for the Victory, that the ſame bold Diſciple, that ſo confidently promis'd our Saviour, that He would die for Him, was in an hour or two, the firſt that renounc'd him. An inſpir'd Teacher, who was ambitious to be, as He afterwards prov'd, a Martyr, reckons it to be the Gift of God, not only to Believe in Chriſt, but to Suffer for that Belief. If (continues She) our Conditions were exchang'd, and *Irene*, inſtead of me, were by Divine Providence ſingl'd out for Martyrdom; I ſhould not envy Her the Glory, of letting many of both Religions ſee, that Chriſtianity can elevate the Courage of a Woman, to a degree that they think appropriated to Men. I would employ my Prayers rather to obtain of Heaven, a divine Support of Her Reſolution, than an inglorious Change of It. And imitating that well

well natur'd *Iſraelite*, who, not only willingly but gladly, parted with his dear *Eſter*, when She went from Him to a Throne; I ſhould be more ſatisfied with *Irene's* Advancement, than with Her Company: And if I did not prefer Her Happineſs to my Own, it would be, becauſe indeed I ſhould look upon them ſo united, that I ſhould find Mine in Hers. Let me then (ſays *Theodora*) conjure you, by all Our paſt and future Friendſhip, rather to congratulate, than lament, the Remove I am going to make. And be not troubled, that One whom you have been pleas'd ſo much to Love, is call'd to be early happy. In ſuch hazardous times as theſe, you know not how ſoon a Perſecutor's Sword may ſend you after Her. And at moſt, this Mortal Life is too ſhort, to let our Separation be very long. And in the mean time, the comfortable Expectation of an unchangeable ſtate, of whoſe Bleſſedneſs the renewed Fruition

tion of each other, will make a Part, and not the greateſt neither; may Conſole you for the abſence of a Perſon, that in the *interim* will be happy enough to wiſh You where She *is*, upon much juſter grounds than you can wiſh Her where She *was*. Let it then (concludes *Theodora*, with weeping eyes,) be a ſufficient proof of my Eſteem and Love of *Irene*, that I part from Her with Tears, when I am going to a Place, where the Divine Oracles aſſure us, that *all Tears ſhall be wip'd from our Eyes*, and be ſucceeded by a *Fulneſs of Joy*, that ſhall laſt for evermore.

Rev. 7. 17.

Pſal. 16. 11.

CHAP. VI.

THough theſe Reaſonings were ſuch, as *Irene* knew not well how to anſwer, yet, being uncapable of acquieſcing in any Diſcourſe, that inferr'd it to be her duty, to part with *Theodora*; ſhe reſolv'd to try, whether the perſwaſions of the company, (which ſhe knew, would be very forward to aſſiſt her) would not be more prevalent, than hers had been: And that ſeem'd an accident very friendly to her deſign, that juſt then happen'd, by the arrival of an intelligent Gentleman, whom ſhe had a while before employ'd to learn News of her Friend; and who, on that ſcore, had been a curious and heedful Spectator, of all that had paſs'd, at the preſidents, in relation to *Didymus*, and was come

come to bring *Irene* an account of it. To hear this, ſhe and her ſorrowful Friend were deſir'd to rejoin the reſt of the company: To which, the high and juſt eſteem they all had of ſo brave a Gentleman, as *Didymus*, gave an impatient deſire to be inform'd of his Adventures. To ſatisfie this Curioſity, the Gentleman that was to do it, did, after a ſhort pauſe, make them the following Narrative.

I ſuppoſe this company needs not be informed by me, of what happen'd to the generous *Didymus*, between the time, that the excellent *Theodora* was condemn'd to an infamous place, and that wherein he had the happineſs, of helping her to make an eſcape out of it. And therefore without waſting any of that little time, whereof, I fear, we may have but too great need, I ſhall proceed to inform you, that when this aſtoniſhment, occaſion'd by this Surprize, of finding a Young man

in the eſcap'd Virgins Room, was a little over, and they had cloath'd *Didymus* in a habit more decent, to appear in, before a publick Aſſembly; they led him away to the Judge: to whom ſome of them related, maliciouſly enough, what had paſs'd, earneſtly begging Juſtice of him, againſt a Perſon, who (they ſaid) could not but be a Chriſtian; and who was not content, to be himſelf an Offender againſt the Laws, but had dared to reſcue another Offender, from the Puniſhment to which they had doom'd her.

Againſt this Charge, the undaunted *Didymus* being ask'd, what Defence he had to make, addreſſing himſelf to the Judge, made this reſolute anſwer. I ſtand accus'd of a twofold Crime, of being a Chriſtian, and of *Theodora*'s Reſcue: And though I cannot ſo ſoon have forgot, how heinous my Accuſers have endeavour'd to make them appear, yet, inſtead of denying either

of

of them, I ſhall own, that I glory in both.

As for Chriſtianity, in an Age, wherein it is ſo cruelly Perſecuted, I would not have embraced the profeſſion of it, but that I was reſolv'd, if there were occaſion, to ſuffer for it. And therefore I ſhall neither deny what they call a Crime, nor make an Apology for it, nor deprecate any *Inflict ion*, (for ſo I call it, rather than *Puniſhment*, which ſtill ſuppoſes a fault) whereto it can expoſe me. Nor could I, without being wanting to the duty of Humanity, refuſe my aſſiſtance, to preſerve the purity of ſo noble a Shrine of Chaſtity, as the Savage deſigners of a Rape on *Theodora*, were going barbarouſly to violate. And the inward ſatisfaction of having done what became me on ſuch occaſions, will ſupport me under any Sufferings, that ſhall be drawn upon me, but by my Loyalty to perſecuted Truth, and my compaſſion of diſtreſs'd Vertue.

The experience I have had, (anſwers the *Preſident*) of the effects of thoſe deſperate Errours, you miſcall *Religion*, makes me inclinable enough, to think, that you, as well as many others of your wild Sect, have both Madneſs and Impiety enough, to put off the Apprehenſions, as well as the other common ſentiments, of Human Nature, and fear *Death*, as little as you do the *Gods*. But ſince you pretend to be more vertuous Men, and obedient Subjects, than others; pray tell me, what you can ſay, for your reſcuing a Malefactor, out of the hands of thoſe Miniſters of Juſtice, that were going to Execute the ſentence of Condemnation upon her.

If, (replies *Didymus*) the Sentence you ſpeak of, had doom'd her but to Death; though I ſhould moſt gladly have ſuffer'd it in her ſtead, yet I had deplor'd your Cruelty, without attempting to defeat it. But I confeſs, I could not without Indignation,

Indignation, as well as Grief, ſee ſuch a perſon as *Theodora*, who for her Beauty, Vertue, and other Perfections, is juſtly admir'd by all that know her, and look'd upon as the honour of her Sex; moſt injuriouſly condemn'd to ſo infamous and barbarous an uſage, as were unfit for the meaneſt and deſpicableſt of Creatures, that belong to the Sex, (whereof ſhe is the Ornament.) And conſidering with my ſelf, that Chaſtity in Women, and eſpecially in Virgins, is ſo much a Vertue, and their right to preſerve it, ſo confes'dly inhærent, that all Nations agree, in aſcribing to them a right to defend it, without reſerve, againſt whoſoever attempts to deprive them of it; I concluded, that to help a diſtreſſed Virgin to preſerve ſo-acknowledg'd a right, was to defeat Raviſhers, rather than to oppoſe Magiſtrates, and not commit a Crime, but hinder the accompliſhing of one. Nor could I think, that 'twas againſt the *Roman* Judges I

acted when I oppos'd Persons, whom their Savage design made me look upon as the worst sort of *Barbarians*. And I did not doubt Sir, (continues *Didymus*) that in your own Breast, when calmer thoughts shall come there, to succeed those that lately possess'd it, I shall be absolv'd from an action, which kept you from dishonouring your self as much, as the execution of your Sentence would have defil'd *Theodora*; and kept you innocent as to Act, from what would have made you Enemies for ever, not only of the fairest half of Mankind, but of all those of our Sex, that retain any Sparks either of Vertue, or good Nature.

If *Theodora*, (replies the *President*) were not a Beauty, and one of your obstinate Sect, I doubt you would never, for her sake, have adventur'd upon so desperate an Attempt, as makes you, not more Disobedient, than Obnoxious, to the Law.

I ſee not, Sir, (rejoins *Didmus*) why it ſhould be a diſparagement to *Theodora*'s Beauty, or to the impreſſions I have receiv'd of it, that all that it has engaged me to do, has been, with the utmoſt hazard of my Life, To reſcue her Purity, and deny my ſelf, in the firſt place, the advantages I endeavour'd to deprive others of. But the Charms of her Mind, needed not thoſe of her Face, to make me attempt to preſerve her. I have often in Camps contended, not without hazard enough, with my victorious fellow-Soldiers, to keep them from violating the Chaſtity of Captives, who had neither Beauty to Captivate others, nor any thing elſe to engage me in their Quarrel, except their being innocent and diſtreſſed Women. But *Theodora*; ſetting her Beauty and Birth aſide, has been ſo eminent, for all the good Qualities and Excellencies that can accompliſh a Perſon of her Sex, and eſpecially, for her Chaſtity, that my

my Heart would have reproach'd mefor, not prizing Vertue enough, if I had declin'd ſo happy an Opportunity, to expreſs the veneration I paid ſo ſhining a one, as Hers. But, (purſues *Didymus*) I would not by what I have ſaid, be thought to deny, that my Religion had a ſhare in the attempt I made to ſerv e a Perſon, that did ſo much adorn it, and was ſo loyal to it. The Chriſtian Doctrine, among many other excellent things, that it preſcribes to its embracers, teaches them, that in ſome caſes, among which ours is compriz'd, they *Ought to lay down their Lives for one another*. But Sir, (concludes *Didymus*) you may be pleas'd to take notice, that what I acted, was according to the Rules of it too. For I did not oppoſe the Execution of your cruel Sentence, by force, but only prevented it by an innocent Stratagem, whereby my ends were obtain'd without Bloodſhed or Violence; no Mans Life

1 *John*, 3. 16.

Life having been ſo much as endanger'd, except my own; which I never thought my ſelf bound to preſerve from any Danger, that Piety or Humanity ſummon'd me to undertake.

Though the *Preſident* could not but be ſenſible, that *Didymus* had ſaid more for himſelf, than was expected; yet, that he might not be thought to be ſatisfied with the Defence of a Perſon, whom he meant to condemn, he told him; I do not think it ſtrange, that thoſe who dare call the very Worſhip of the Gods, *Superſtition* and *Idolatry*, and and that which all Men but your ſelves call Impiety, *Religion*, ſhould ſtile *Rebellion* againſt the *Magiſtrate*; *Loyalty* to the Truth. But how induſtriouſly ſoever you ſtrive, not only to cloak a Criminal action, but transform it into a Vertuous one; I can eaſily, through all its diſguiſes, percieve the diſobedience and refractorineſs to Civil Government,

ment, that is ſo contagious, and ſo ſpred among the embracers of your Sect; that Princes have no other way, but your Ruine, to ſecure their own Safety, which would be quickly endanger'd, if your power and numbers were half as great, as the diſloyalty of your Principles and Practices.

To be a Sufferer for my Religion, (anſwers *Didymus*) is that, which I ſhall not ſo properly ſubmit to, with Reſignation, as Embrace, with with Joy. But to find my Religion a ſufferer with me, if not for me; and to ſee Chriſtianity made a State Crime, while it ſeverely prohibits and condemns all Crimes, and none more expreſly, than diſobedience to the juſt commands of Magiſtrates; is that, which, I confeſs, do's not a little trouble me. And therefore, Sir, I hope you will allow a Perſon, that is much more concerned to keep his Religion than himſelf, from being endanger'd by this Accuſation;

Accuſation; to give you a righter apprehenſion, than our Calumniators have done, of the innocenteſt, as well as the trueſt, Religion in the World.

Though for my part, (continues *Didymus*) I think, that the liberty of ſerving God, by ſuch ways as are not repugnant to the Light, or Laws of Nature, or the welfare of civil Society's, is the common right of Mankind, and cannot be denied Man, without Injuſtice; *yet* I do not now plead for it: and you are more concern'd to look to that, than I. For if you make me ſuffer, for the innocent uſe of that Right, which God and Nature have granted unto all men; I ſhall but undergo a Tranſient Puniſhment, but you will expoſe your ſelf, to an Eternal, and (which is worſe) to a deſerved one. No Perſons in the World, can pay more Obedience to the Laws of their Superiours, than Chriſtians do. We that can

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ſhed the Enemies Blood, and hazard our own, as freely, and perhaps as ſuccesfully, as any Soldiers in your Armies, ſuffer you to ſhed ours, as tamely as any ſheep you have in your folds. And ſure, we are very unhappy, as well as you very incredulous, that thoſe Profeſſions of Loyalty and Obedience, that are not more viſibly written in our Books, than frequently ſign'd with our Blood, cannot gain Credit with you; nor our death it ſelf convince you, when the wounds that we quietly ſuffer to pierce our Breaſts, would open you Windows into our hearts, if ſome had not a greater mind to peirce them, than to know them. But the ſame juſt care we have to obey Authority, what rate ſoever the ſubmiſſions coſt us, forbids us to do thoſe things, for the refuſal whereof, Authority condemns us. For God being, as the only Creator, ſo the Supreme Governor of man, his Laws are thoſe of the trueſt Supreme Authority

rity; and Princes themſelves being his Subjects, and but his Lieutenants upon Earth; to decline their commands, when ever they prove repugnant unto his, is not ſo much an Act of diſobedience to the Subordinate power, as of Loyalty to the ſupreme and univerſal Sovereign. And in ſuch caſes we are no more Rebels againſt the Emperor, when we prefer the performance of Gods Laws, to a compliance with His, than we ſhould be, in caſe we ſhould diſobey the orders of the Governour of the Province we live in, if they ſhould prove repugnant to thoſe of *Auguſtus*. And even in theſe caſes; if we cannot yeild an *active obedience* to the commands of the civil Sovereign, we do not refuſs him, the utmoſt we can conſent to, which is *paſſive obedience*: and when our conſciences permit us not to do, thoſe to us unlawful things, that he commands, they enjoin us to ſuffer unreſiſtedly, whatever penalty's he pleaſes to impoſe. And give me leave

leave Sir, to add, (ſo *Dydimus* continues) that we are ſo far, from making Religion a Cloak to the purſuit of preſent advantages, that you daily ſee us renounce them all, and our lives to boot, to maintain our Loyalty to our Maker, without hopes of being recompens'd, but in another World; and even there we cannot expect any, but by the ſentence of a Judge, whom none can either bribe or deceive, and who is more ſevere to crimes, than any Perſecutor on Earth can be, to Innocents. I will not tell you, purſues *Dydimus*, that on the other ſide, the aſſurance we have of the ineſtimable rewards laid up in heaven, for Loyalty to God and his Truths, and the internal applauſes of a good conſcience, are things of ſo elevating and ſatisfying a nature, that our Religion can make the hearts it poſſeſſes, not only deteſt the Ambition of thoſe Subjects, that aſpire to Earthly Crowns, but perhaps, pitty the condition of thoſe Princes, that

poſſeſs

poſſeſs them. But I dare, Sir, avow, that the harmleſneſs of our Principles, is not more legible in our Profeſſion, than in our Practices and Sufferings. For the multitude of *Chriſtians* is ſo great, that [in your Cities, your Country, your Courts of Juſtice, your Camps, and all places of Publick Reſort, except your Temples, they are not only preſent, but numerous ;] and your Enemies, as well as your Armies, have been ſufficiently convinc'd, they know as well how to Kill, as Dye ; ſo that 'tis only becauſe we will not forfeit our Innocence, by a forbidden way of defending it, that we are expos'd to ſuch cruel Sufferings for it. And I doubt not but equitable Eſtimators of things will conclude, that our calmly ſubmiting to ſuch inhuman Uſages, ſufficiently ſhews, that we do not deſerve them. *Tertul.*

The Judge, diſcerning ſtill more clearly, that his diſcourſes made much leſs impreſſions upon *Didymus*, than thoſe of *Didymus* did upon the Hearers; reſolv'd to break off this kind of Converſation, and with a ſtern Countenance, told the Priſoner, that 'twas high time for him to remember, that he was a Judge, and not a Prieſt; and that therefore, though his compaſſion had hitherto invited him to employ Perſuaſions, yet now their unſucceſsfulneſs oblig'd him to declare poſitively, that he was ſure the gods, that he and the world worſhipp'd, were the true ones; and that if *Didymus* did not forthwith, acknowledge them to be ſo, by Sacrificing to them, he ſhould quickly feel their power, by being put to a death, his obſtinacy made him both deſerve, and appear fond of.

Didymus, without ſeeming to be at all mov'd at this rough Language, calmly

calmly, as well as reſolutely, reply'd.

Tho' Sir, I am moſt ready, whenever I am call'd to it, to Suffer for my Religion, yet I would not be thought to expoſe my ſelf, for an obſtinate Denial, to hear and conſider, what may be objected againſt it. We *Chriſtians*, whatever wilfulneſs may be miſimputed to us, are not ſo fond of Sufferings, or of our own Conceits, as not to be more willing to have them brought to the Bar, than to be condemn'd there for them: And perſecuted Opinions are things, which, as we do not renounce, ſo we do not embrace, for their being ſuch. Nor are we ſo blind and wilful, as to reject clear Arguments, that would both inſtruct us and reſcue us too, if any ſuch could be propos'd, by the Embracers of your Religion.

This I ſay, Sir, continues *Didymus*, not to contradict what you

were ſaying, of your being not a Prieſt but a Judge; but to clear Conſtancy from the imputation of Obſtinacy, and declare, that if we could ſee Reaſons on your ſide, fitted to deliver us from Error, and from death, we would not be ſo mad, or ſo perverſe, as to chuſe rather to renounce Life, than embrace Truth. But pardon me, Sir, (ſubjoyns he) if I think, that, though you are commiſſion'd by the Supreme Power, to be a Judge for Life and Death, yet you are not conſtituted by the Supreme Verity, a Judge of Truth and Falſhood. And therefore, I take your owning to worſhip many Gods, who, by their very being many Deities, are ſufficiently proved not to be true ones; for a Declaration of *your* Opinion, not a Demonſtration that it ought to be *mine* too. If you preſs us with Arguments, we are ready to anſwer yours, and offer you ours: But when inſtead of them, you employ Threats, we do not think it proper to argue againſt

againſt them, but to deſpiſe them; ſince 'tis not our Reaſon that they Aſſault, but our Conſtancy. And therefore, give me leave to tell you, Sir, concludes *Didymus*, that the *Chriſtian* Religion can ſo fortifie and elevate the Mind, and place it ſo much above the reach of a Political Jurisdiction, that I ſhall ſuffer your Sentence with far leſs trouble, than you will ſoon or late feel, at the remembrance of your having pronounc'd it; and you will not find it in the power of all your executed threats, to ruine either my Conſtancy, or ſo much as my Joy.

The Judge, enrag'd, to ſee his Power thus deſpis'd, and as he interpreted it, affronted, by a Priſoner; declar'd, he would defer no longer than one hour (which ſpace he allow'd him to repent his Errors in,) to pronounce againſt him the fatal Sentence, and commanded him to be immediately led to the place, where 'twas to be executed;

towards which he himself intended to follow at some distance: Whether it were to feed his cruel Eyes with a Spectacle, whose tragicalness his revenge would make acceptable to him; or to prevent any Tumult or Disorders, that the Courage of *Didymus*, and the esteem and pity it had excited in the numerous by-standers, might possibly occasion.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

AS ſoon as the Gentleman, that made the paſt Diſcourſe, had ended it, the juſt Idea it form'd in the minds of the hearers, and eſpecially of the two Ladies, of the ſingular Piety and heroick Courage of *Didymus*, made ſuch an impreſſion on the grateful & compaſſionate *Theodora*, as exceedingly heightned her reſolution to reſcue him, if it were poſſible, and haſt'ned her to begin immediately to attempt it. In order to which, having obſerv'd that the hearers liſten'd ſo attentively to what the Relator ſaid, that they then minded nothing elſe, ſhe took that nick of time to withdraw herſelf ſilently, into another room; and by a pair of back ſtairs, convey'd herſelf out of the houſe:

Whence by indirect wayes, (for fear of being overtaken in the ſhorteſt,) ſhe went with as much haſt and gladneſs, to an almoſt certain death, as others are wont to ſhun and eſcape it with; leaving *Irene* and her other friends, no leſs amaz'd than troubl'd, when ſometime afterward, they perceiv'd her miſſing, and found all the diligence they employ'd to retrieve her, fruitleſs. For, *Theodora*, fearing ſhe could not long eſcape the diligence of her Purſuers, unleſs ſhe haſten'd to a place, where ſhe juſtly thought they would not follow her; delay'd not to go directly towards the Company, that ſhe was told attended the *Preſident*, in the affairs that were tranſacting in his Court. Among theſe Attendants, ſhe had not ſtaid long, before ſhe deſcry'd her brave Lover, under a ſtrict and rude Guard; but with a look ſo manly, and ſo ſerene, as ſhew'd, that he deſerv'd another uſage; and was not in the leaſt daunted nor diſcompos'd

pos'd by that he met with. This moving Sight, ſo affected the generous & compaſſionate *Theodora*, that tho' in ſo publick place and manner, ſhe could with leſs reluctancy dye for *Didymus*, than ſhe could plead for him; yet her gratitude ſurmounting her baſhfulneſs, after ſome conflict within herſelf, ſhe made towards the Tribunal; to which ſhe found a more eaſie paſſage than ſhe expected. For, the advantagiouſneſs of her ſhape and ſtature, and gracefulneſs of her motions, eaſily produc'd for her, ſuch Sentiments, in the admiring by-ſtanders, as made them with great reſpect, give her way, & let her, without diſturbance, paſs on to the Bar. She had but a very little while ſtaid there, before the *Preſident* was mov'd, by the concourſe of thoſe whom Curioſity and Wonder invited to gaze on the fair ſtranger, to caſt his eyes on Her; and notwithſtanding the unlikelihood, that ſhe ſhould appear there, without having been Forcibly brought

brought thither; as ſoon as, out of reſpect to his Dignity, ſhe had lifted up her Veil, he diſcern'd that it was ſhe, by a ſort of Beauty ſo peculiar, as was not eaſily either to be met with in others, or to be forgotten by any that had ever ſeen it.

But, though the Judge were thus ſurpriz'd at her preſence, yet he little leſs admir'd her Courage, than her Beauty, when, with a Face, wherein the Bluſhes of her Cheeks, and the Aſſuredneſs of her Looks, equally diſcover'd her Modeſty and her Fearleſneſs, ſhe told him: I know, Sir, that 'tis a very unuſual thing, for a Perſon of my Sex and Religion, to come to this Place unſent for. But I hope you will be pleas'd to conſider, that, as the *Action* is extraordinary, the *Occaſion* of it is ſo too. For both Juſtice, the Virtue that you ſit here to diſtribute; and Gratititude, founded upon the higheſt Obligations, engage me to appear before you, on

on the behalf of that brave Priſoner, (at which words ſhe pointed at *Didymus*,) and preſent you the Object, on which you may inflict with Legal Juſtice, what you cannot make him ſuffer, without being tax'd of Cruelty. For ſuppoſing a Debt to be due to the Law, yet it would be more Severe than Juſt, to proſecute the Security, now the Principal offers to pay the Debt. He may well be look'd upon as my Hoſtage, whom I now come to redeem: And 'tis not, Sir, your intereſt, to decline the Exchange, ſince by it you will preſerve a Perſon, whoſe Courage, ingag'd by his Gratitude, may do ſignal Service in the Roman Army. And ſince my Eſcape was all his Crime, I beſeech you, let my ſurrender of *my ſelf*, obtain *his* abſolution.

Here *Theodora* paus'd a while, partly to recover from the Diſorder, ſo unuſual and difficult an Effort of her Modeſty had put her into; and partly,

partly, to obſerve the Judges Countenance, upon his hearing what ſhe had ſaid, and to take meaſures thence in what ſhe was further to ſpeak. The *Preſident* in the mean time continued ſilent, whether the longer to hear the muſick of her Voice, or becauſe ſo many Charms, as Nature had crouded in her Face, and ſo much ſadneſs, as her concern for her *Lover* had diſplay'd in her Looks, had ſomewhat mollify'd him, as they might have done a Tiger. Whereupon the fair *Suppliant*, hoping that his not interrupting her, proceeded from ſome relenting Thoughts, reſumes her Diſcourſe, in theſe terms. But if, Sir, to procure the diſmiſſion of this *Gentleman*, your Juſtice had need to be ſeconded by your Clemency, perhaps you never had, nor never will have, an Object whoſe merit may ſo well warrant the fulleſt Exercíſe of it. For his Life, ever ſince he bore Arms, has been imploy'd in the Service of his Princes, and fearleſsly

fearleſsly hazarded for their Greatneſs. And the Action for which he is now in trouble, is ſo Heroick, and ſo diſintereſſed an one of Courage and Compaſſion, that in it he could ſcarce have any other motive, than the Greatneſs of his *Generoſity*, nor other End, than the Exerciſe of it. Nor need you fear, that your Clemency on this occaſion ſhould introduce a bad Example; for this of *Didymus* is never like to be imitated, nor can be ſo, but by Perſons too virtuous to be Delinquents. And if ſuch Actions be Criminal, at leaſt 'tis unlikely they will grow common Crimes. And here *Theodora*, perceiving that the impatient *Didymus* (now come again to himſelf, after the aſtoniſhing ſurprize this Adventure gave him) was upon the point to interrupt her, ſhe thus prevents him. And you, brave *Didymus*, forbear to oppoſe the accompliſhment of my juſt Deſires. The courſe that I now take, is the only

only that I could take, to evidence my Gratitude, and to let you ſee, that you have not exercis'd the nobleſt Acts of Generoſity and Friendſhip, towards a Perſon inſenſible of the Dictates of thoſe Vertues. I could not (continues ſhe) but be glad to be reſcu'd from the Ignominy of a Rape, but I did not intend to be robb'd of the Glory of Suffering for Chriſt; which is alſo the only means left me to evince, that I Declin'd Diſhonor, and not Death, and never meant ſo much to diſoblige the World, as for the ſake of an inſignificant Maid, to deprive it of one of the moſt generous of Men. You have left yourſelf but one way to encreaſe your paſt favours, which is, to allow me the only real Expreſſion I can make of my ſenſe of them, & that in ſuch a way, as can, at moſt, but make ſome little Diminution of them, without pretending to make a Retribution for them. If therefore (concludes ſhe) you will compleat the

Obligation

Obligation you have laid on me, by preſerving to me the Coronet of Virginity, you muſt not oppoſe my obtaining the Crown of Martyrdom.

Didymus had need of all the Reſpect, that he paid his admirable Miſtreſs, to keep him thus long, from interrupting a Diſcourſe, that tended ſo little to his ſatisfaction; and therefore ſhe had no ſooner put a period to it, than (with a deep ſigh) he told her; Ceaſe, *Theodora*, ceaſe, to plead for the continuance of Life, that you are almoſt as cruel to *me*, in thus endeavouring to preſerve, as you are, in thus hazarding *your own*. And if I durſt not hope for, from the *Preſident*, more than I ſee I muſt on this occaſion, expect from *You*; I ſhould think my ſelf as perfectly wretched, as (whatever your Intentions be) your proceedings are unkind. But I am confident, our unbyas'd Judge is too impartial, not to diſcern in your Diſcourſe, that the exceſs of your Good-

Goodneſs, has had the chief intereſt in the management of your Plea; the caſe about which *we* differ, being in itſelf ſo clear, that alone to ſtate it, is ſufficient to Plead it on *my* Behalf. For, I entic'd you to eſcape out of Priſon, and then, at my own peril, facilitated to you the means of doing ſo: You leave me behind, as a Pawn to the Laws, and theſe finding me in your room, make their great Miniſter, before whoſe Tribunal we ſtand, doom *me*, for *your* Offence, to the Death deſign'd for your Puniſhment: Which ſince I joyfully proffer my ſelf to ſuffer for you; or rather, ſince you ſuffer it in me your Proxy; the illuſtrious *Preſident* is too well acquainted with his Office, to need to be told, that, at leaſt in Equity, the *Surety*'s Payment, diſcharges the *Principal* from the Debt; eſpecially, when he not only proffers the Payment, but moſt earneſtly deſires the acceptance of It, as a great advantage to him. I hope then,

then, Great Sir, ſays he, (turning himſelf to the *Preſident*, with additional Reſpect to that he had ſhew'd him before,) that you will accept of *my* Life, inſtead of *hers*, who deſerves a long and happy one; and that, when my Sentence of Condemnation ſhall be pronounc'd, and gladly acquieſc'd in, it may Free her, I am Condemn'd for. The love of Self-preſervation is ſo natural, that it cannot be made Capital, without affronting Nature, and puniſhing as well what Men *are*, as what they *do*: And the love of Purity and Honour does ſo much become a Chaſt Virgin, that the natural conſequences of it are too Commendable, to be fit to be made Penal. 'Tis I, who having deſpis'd Dangers that I might eaſily have avoided, when 'twas Queſtion to do an illegal thing, do yet glory in the Crime, that am the juſt and proper Object of the rigour of your Laws: And her Years are yet ſo tender, and her Diſpoſition ſo inno-

an unconcern'd, yet a ſilent Hearer of it: The ſtrange novelty of the conteſt, and no leſs extraordinary generoſity and gracefulneſs of the Contenders, having given him an attention, that kept him from interrupting them. But when their debate had proceeded thus far; his ſtern nature, whoſe actings had been but ſuſpended by his curioſity, prompted him to tell the generous Couple; I know not what preſumption makes you plead, as if each of you were the others only Judge, and had the Supreme Authority of condemning or abſolving you; and I were only an unconcern'd auditor, or at leaſt, ſate here to ratifie the Sentence you ſhall agree upon, between your ſelves. But you will quickly find, to your coſt, that the *Roman* Laws, and Magiſtrates, are not to be trifled with.

Great Sir, replies *Didymus*, you much miſapprehend our Conduct, if

if you think your ſelf ſlighted by it: For, 'twas not want of reſpect to your Authority, and Power, that made us diſcourſe as we did; but a ſuppoſition, not injurious to you, that you would in the exerciſe of that Power, manifeſt that you deſerve it, by tempering it with two excellent vertues, that beſt become a Magiſtrate, Equity and Clemency. This preſumption, Sir, and not any diſreſpectful one, was that upon which we proceeded in our diſcourſe; ſtill taking it for granted, that you would not puniſh two, for that which was indeed, but the fault of one; and that if either of us were, by the others conſent, to ſuffer; your Equity, or your Clemency, would prevail with you, to releaſe the other.

Though *Didymus*, had worded what he ſaid, ſo cautiouſly, that a diſcerning hearer might perceive, that his expreſſions related to the Judges Dignity, not his perſon;

yet that ſelf-flattery, which is but too common an attendant on Men in Power, making the *Preſident* take all theſe reſpectful words to himſelf, made him allow *Didymus*, without interruption, to proceed in his diſcourſe, and ſay; you will eaſily grant, Sir, that Goodneſs, whereof Clemency is a noble part, may bring a Magiſtrate, who is Heavens Vice-gerent upon Earth, as high a Veneration as Power or Greatneſs does; if you pleaſe to conſider, that thoſe of your Religion, when they would with the moſt deference ſpeak of God, give the Title of *Moſt Good* the preference to that of *Moſt Great*, ſtyling him, as the *Chriſtians* likewiſe often do, *Deus Optimus maximus*. Certainly, Clemency is never more a vertue, nor leſs grudg'd at by Juſtice, than when 'tis exercis'd towards Vertuous Perſons, by reſcuing them from the perſecutions of Fortune, and the unintended rigour of the Laws. I ſay *unintended rigour*, ſayes *Didymus*,

mus, for I cannot think that the *Roman* Legiſlators, that have honor'd injur'd Chaſtity ſo much in *Lucretia*, and encourag'd Gallantry and other Vertues, by no leſs than Crowns and Triumphs; meant to make the productions of *Chaſtity*, *Conſtancy* and *Gratitude*, Criminal things. And, tho' *Chriſtians* diſſent from others in matters of Religion, yet thoſe moral Vertues that were ſo eſteem'd by the *Romans*, do not loſe their nature, when practis'd by *Chriſtians*: And thoſe brave men, whoſe love to Vertue made them Maſters of the World, did not ſcruple to honour it in their very Enemies; and did it ſo much, even in the moſt irreconcilable of them, that more than one or two Statues of *Hannibal* were erected at *Rome*; to which Triumphant City 'tis perhaps more glorious, to have thus honor'd him, than vanquiſh'd him. And ſure they that thought *Lucretias* Chaſtity merited ſo many Statues, *Pliny.*

would not think that *Theodoras* deſerv'd a Stake or a Scaffold. This Ladies actions and mine, are not ſo hainous, but that in happier perſons, and milder times, they have been look'd on under a notion very differing from that of criminal ones. But Sir, continues *Didymus*, addreſſing himſelf to the *Preſident*, in a very humble manner, if there muſt needs be offer'd up ſome ſacrifice to appeaſe the angry Laws, I beſeech you to let their rigour be ſatisfied with my Blood, and ſpare this harmleſs Lady; to whom, if your compaſſion be needful, I hope you will not want it for an object, whoſe Excellencies cannot only make it reaſonable, but meritorious. For it will preſerve to *Antioch* its faireſt Ornament; and a Life ſo Exemplary, that to give it an untimely period, for actions, which, being laudable in their own nature, nothing but a rigid interpretation of the Law can make criminal, would be to make the Laws a terror, rather to the good than

than to the wicked. It would be thought inhumane to treat her as a delinquent, whom you may juſtly wiſh your daughters ſhould reſemble; when by the Grant of what I implore, you will be ſure to receive both the thanks of her Sex, and the applauſe of ours, and what out values both, the ſatisfaction of having ſav'd and oblig'd one of the moſt admirable Perſons in the world.

Didymus now perceiving, that the perſon he pleaded for, was preparing herſelf to interrupt him; readdreſs'd himſelf to her, and told her; do not, Madam, I beſeech you, require of my obſequiouſneſs, proofs inconſiſtent with my love; and add not to my infelicity, by putting me in ſo uneaſie a condition, as to find it my duty to oppoſe your deſires: Ah! refuſe not to oblige the world, by preſerving the moſt accompliſh'd it can glory in: Deny me not the ſatisfaction, whereof I am ſo ambitious, of being the happy

py inſtrument of your deliverance; and then I may ſay, that I never could juſtly dye more ſeaſonably than now, when being at the height of all my joyes, my longer life muſt of neceſſity give an ebb to my felicity; ſince after the Glory of having ſav'd *Theodora*, I hope for no higher on Earth, than that of dying for her. Then perceiving her ready to renew the Conteſt, he told her (with a low voice, that the Judge might not hear him, and with a ſadneſs in his looks, which ſhe, that knew his Courage, could impute to nothing but his almoſt boundleſs concern for her;) Madam, though the *Preſidents* impatience did not call upon us to conclude our Conteſt, yet my condition and reſolution ought to put a haſty period to it: For, Madam, I muſt poſitively declare to you, that it would be as bootleſs as cruel, for you to think to protect my Life, by the abandoning of your own: Since to

owe

owe a Life to that Cauſe, would make it not only uneaſie but inſupportable to me, and conſequently uncapable of laſting. So that enjoyning me to ſurvive you, would condemn me to a Life, which after the loſs of yours, muſt be ſpent, if it could laſt, in fruitleſs deploring that Loſs. Forbear therefore, concludes he, I moſt earneſtly beſeech you Madam, to exact ſuch proofs of my Obedience, that 'tis as little in my power to give you, as it ought to be in your will to require them; ſince for *Didymus* to ſurvive *Theodora*, is as great an impoſſibility, as it would be an unhappineſs. O admirable Conteſt! where the noble Antagoniſts did not ſtrive for Victory, but Death; or endeavour'd to overcome each other, that the Victor might periſh for the Vanquiſh'd: Where Self-love, the moſt radical affection of human Nature, is ſacrific'd to a Love, equally chaſt and diſintereſs'd: And where Vertue

tue makes each of the Contenders, in geniouſly Solicitous to appear Criminal, that the Antagoniſt may be treated as innocent. How well does this proceeding prove that inſpir'd Sentence true, that *Love is Stronger than Death*; ſince in this Conflict, the generous Friends, are by the former, made Rivals for the latter?

CHAP

CHAP. VIII.

THE afflicted Virgin, to whom theſe moving things were ſaid, finding that ſhe ſhould but loſe her diſwaſions on *Didymus*, thought fit to addreſs herſelf once more, to the *Preſident*; and with humble Geſtures, accompany'd with Looks, and with a Voice, that would have ſoften'd any that were not invincibly Obdurate, ſhe told him; Though Sir, the Arguments us'd by this Gentleman, had far better prov'd than they have, that, of us two, he is the fitteſt perſon to be condemn'd; yet I hope, where you Preſide with ſo much Authority, he will not fare the worſe for being generous; and that what he has done, will be more prevalent with you, than what he has ſaid. Ever ſince

ſince he was capable of bearing Arms, he employ'd them in the ſervice of the Emperors; and in their Camps chearfully follow'd the *Roman* Eagles, where-ever they durſt fly: And after his having this day hazarded himſelf ſo generouſly, out of compaſſion to a diſtreſs'd Virgin; what examples of gallantry may not be expected from ſuch a Courage, engag'd by his Gratitude, when he ſhall act for the acqueſt of Glory, and the Service of his Country? If a guilty intention be neceſſary to make an action ſo, his will not be found to be Criminal; ſince he did not intend the violation of any Law, but to ſecond, what we are told to be, the deſign of all juſt Laws; which is, to protect the Innocent, and encourage Vertue. But if by a rigid interpretation of the Law, he may be brought within the reach of it; I hope his Miſdemeanor will not appear ſo great, but that your Clemency may allow him all that I beg

beg for him, which is, that he may be permitted to repair a miſtake in the exerciſe of his vertue, by the continuation of thoſe Services in the *Roman* Army, which will be far more uſeful to the publick than his death, in his preſent circumſtances, can be. To this *Theodora* would perhaps have added, (though ſhe could ſcarce have done it, without ſome reluctancy from her modeſty) The things, Sir, that he has been pleas'd to act and hazard for me, may perſuade you, that if, contrary to my prayers and hopes, you ſhould deſign ſeverity towards him, you may more ſenſibly puniſh him, by my death, than by more immediate inflictions on himſelf. And 'tis like ſhe would have enforc'd her arguments and intreaties, for a Perſon for whom ſhe was ſo much and ſo juſtly concern'd, when the *Preſident*, vex'd to find that both of them ſo little valu'd Life, whoſe deprivation was the moſt formidable thing he could threaten them with,

with, prevented her, by ſaying, with a ſtern countenance, No, I will hear no more, having heard but too much already : It does not become a *Roman* Magiſtrate, to ſuffer any longer with patience ; that Priſoners and Criminals ſhould daringly diſobey the Laws, ſlight all their threats, and glory in their violation. What each of you has ſaid to prove himſelf guilty, affords abundant reaſon to condemn you both. Wherefore, ſince you cannot agree among your ſelves, I will be your Umpire, and give both of you what each deſires and merits. You, Obſtinate Maid, ſayes he, turning to *Theodora*, ſhall dye for having broken Priſon. You Diſobedient Soldier, ſayes he to *Didymus*, ſhall dye for having perſwaded and further'd her Eſcape. But to ſpecifie your chiefeſt Crime, than which there needs no other, nor can be a greater, you both ſhall dye becauſe you are *Chriſtians*, and conſequently Enemies to the *Roman* Emperors,

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and the Gods that made them ſo.

This fatal Doom being pronounc'd, the Judge order'd the condemn'd Priſoners to be taken aſide, and ſtrongly guarded, till all things were in readineſs for their Execution: Which preparatives he gave order to haſten. Yet finding by the diſcontented looks, and confus'd murmurs, of the by-ſtanders, that the Charms and Innocence of *Theodora*, and the Youth, Courage and Friendſhip, of both the no leſs generous than unfortunate Priſoners, made his Sentence o be far leſs lik'd, than were the perſons & behavior of thoſe it had paſs'd upon; declar'd, that whilſt he was diſpatching other publick buſineſs, he permitted any that ſhould have Charity enough to make a hopeleſs Attempt, to endeavour to convert thoſe obſtinate miſcreants: Adding withal an intimation, that even they might ſpeed in their ſuit, if they would ſeaſonably, with incenſe

in their hands, flee to the Altars of the Gods, and humbly implore of Them, Pardon and Safety.

This reſpite, as it expos'd the generous Couple to have their conſtancy aſſaulted by Infidels, ambitious of making ſuch illuſtrious Perſons Proſelytes, ſo it gave them the welcom opportunity, of interchanging ſome diſcourſe with one another.

Theſe Conferences were begun by *Didymus*; who ſeeing himſelf upon the point of final Separation from his admirable Miſtreſs, could not forbear feeling in himſelf ſuch diſorders, as on all other ſad occaſions, his great Courage had kept him from reſenting. And this unuſual commotion of mind, was uneaſie enough to oblige him to ſay, to the fair Perſon that occaſion'd it; Though, Madam, the military courſe of life I have with ſome forwardneſs purſu'd, has accuſtom'd me to meet Death in variety of formidable

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Shapes and Dreſſes, without being diſcompos'd by it; yet when I ſee the world going to be rob'd of its nobleſt Ornament, and my ſelf to be depriv'd of the perſon I moſt love and admire in it; and when I ſee this matchleſs Perſon ready to be raviſh'd from us, both in the flow'r of her age, and by the infamous hand of an Executioner; I think it were rather ſtupidneſs not to be afflicted, than any weakneſs to be deeply ſo.

I was, anſwer'd *Theodora*, ſo fully ſatisfy'd before, of your Friendſhip and Compaſſion; that this new grief of yours, as 'tis a very needleſs proof of them, ſo 'tis a very unwelcom one. For, if I were to allow any thing to grieve me, when I am entring into *the fulneſs of Joy*, it ought to be, that I find your good nature renders this ſeemingly diſtreſs'd Condition of mine very uneaſie to You; which through Gods aſſiſtance, is very litttle ſo to

me; and yet will be leſs ſo, if, congratulating rather than deploring our Martyrdom, you will eaſe me of the juſteſt and greateſt part of my Grief, that conſiſts in being unhappily acceſſory to yours, and ſeeing you needleſly troubl'd at mine. That circumſtance, adds ſhe, of my death, which I perceive much afflicts you, might in my opinion more juſtly leſſen, than aggravate your Sorrow. For, I look upon it rather as a Favour, than an Infelicity, that I am early remov'd out of the World, where I ſee, and ſuffer, and (which is worſt of all) do, ſo much Ill. To be early reſcu'd from the Snares of a Dangerous and Perſecuting Age, and preſerv'd *from the Evil to come*, is rather a Privilege, than a Calamity, to thoſe that are duely ſenſible, as I deſire to be, that one can never arrive unſeaſonably at Heaven, nor be too early happy. And, in this perſuaſion (continues *Theodora*,) I am confirm'd by conſidering, that the Firſt

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of thoſe who are recorded to have religiouſly deceas'd, in the old Teſtament, and in the new, juſt *Abel*, and *John* the Baptiſt; both of them dy'd young, and periſh'd by the hands of thoſe that Perſecuted them for their Piety. And even that ſpotleſs Lamb of God *who did no ſin*, but by his Satisfaction, Precepts, and Example, *takes away the ſin of the World*; was ſacrific'd almoſt in the flow'r of his Age: So little is it an unhappineſs, or a mark of Gods disfavour, to eſcape the toyles and dangers of a troubleſom Navigation, by being early, though by a boiſterous Wind, blown into the Port. And, if it could become a Woman to encourage a Heroe, I ſhould exhort both you and my ſelf too, generous *Didymus*, (continues ſhe) to entertain our preſent Condition with Sentiments becoming *Chriſtians*. And, as it does not trouble me directly, ſo it ought not to trouble you upon the ſcore of ſympathy; that I am

ſecur'd from the hazards and inconveniencies of Age: But be pleas'd to make uſe of that Courage, now at the end of your daies, that you have conſtantly expreſs'd in the courſe of your life. And, do not, I beſeech you, repine, either that you or I, is to fall by the hand of an Executioner. For that ſeeming, and but ſeeming Ignominy, was the lot both of our Saviour's immediate Harbinger, and of our Saviour himſelf. And, when we conſider for whom, and for what, we ſuffer; we may find reaſon enough to aſſume the ſentiments of the Apoſtles, who, after having been miſus'd by the Jewiſh Council, *went from their preſence rejoycing, that they had been thought worthy to Suffer for His name*; for whom we are going to ſuffer the like things. For, *Didymus*, Gods gracious Providence has not left us to periſh, by ling'ring or tormenting Sickneſs, or troubleſom Old Age; nor yet for ſome com-

Acts 5. 41.

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mon Cauſe, or ſome unimportant End. But all in our fate is noble: And what to others is meer Death, a debt due to Nature, or the puniſhment of Sin, to us is Martyrdom, the nobleſt act of Chriſtianity, and ſhorteſt way to Everlaſting Glory.

A Diſcourſe that reliſh'd ſo much more of a Martyr than of a Virgin, gave *Didymus* a riſe to continue a Converſation, by which he found himſelf as well aſſiſted, as charm'd; and therefore obſerving the ſerenity of his Miſtreſſes looks, to be little inferiour to the beauty of her face, and remembring what inſtances ſhe had that day given of an altogether extraordinary Piety and Courage; was, by the ſentiments theſe reflections produ'cd in him, prompted to tell her: I ſhould be juſtly inconſolable, Madam, to ſee my ſelf and the world, upon the point of being depriv'd of ſo admirable a Perſon, as *Theodora* has, by this

daies various Tryals, manifeſted Her ſelf to be; if I were not confident, that my Loſs will be as ſhort as great; and that in the State we are now entring upon, I ſhall be allow'd what approaching Death will deny me in this, and ſhall find in Heaven the endearing happineſs of converſing with Her more freely, than our Perſecutions and Her Reſervedneſs would here permit. For Madam, (continues He,) I am Friend enough to my own Felicity, to believe aſſuredly, that thoſe who ſhall be happy enough to meet in Heaven, will know one another there, and have their joyes hightned by the remembrance of what paſt between them upon Earth. For in the bleſt State we are haſtening to, our Faculties, and conſequently our memory, will not only be gratify'd with Suitable Objects, but be improv'd by enlarg'd Capacities. And even in a condition ſhort of that we this day expect; mens knowledge has been advanc'd, at leaſt as much

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as is neceſſary for our knowing one another, without the helps that are ordinarily requiſite to make us do ſo. As ſoon as ever *Adam* ſaw *Eve*, he could confidently ſay of her, that *ſhe was bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh.* When *Noah* awak'd from his Sleep, he could tell that during his ſleep, his younger Son had behav'd himſelf irreverently towards him. When our *Saviour* was tranfigur'd on *M. Tabor*, the three chos'n diſciples that attended him preſently knew *Moſes* & *Elias*, whom they had never ſeen before, in ſpite of the Diguiſe that the Glory they appear'd in put upon them. *Matt.* 11.4. *Luke* 9. 31.

St. *Paul* tells his *Theſſalonians*, they ſhall be his joy & crown, before their common Lord at his appearing: To the truth of which it ſeems requiſite, that both the Preachers and the Converts ſhall be publickly known at that great appearance, and *Aſſembly of the firſt born, whoſe names are written* 1 *Theſ.* 2. 19, 20.

written in Heaven; and conſequently, that men there ſhall know one another. Our Divine Redeemer, continues *Didymus*, teaches us, that there is Joy in the preſence of the holy Angels over a repenting Sinner; which argues, that whether they know of his Converſion in a more intuitive way, or by the information of thoſe Angels, that are ſometimes ſent to this lower world about human affairs, they yet have a knowledg of particular perſons, and take notice of particular things that concern them. And, which makes exceedingly for my preſent purpoſe, he elſewhere introduces *Abraham* in Paradice, calling upon the uncharitable Rich Man, to remember what his own and *Lazarus*'s differing States had been upon Earth: And, which is yet more, to ſhew, that even in the place of utter Darkneſs and Torment, the Memory of paſt things and perſons is not obliterated; the Rich Man is introduc'd, as remembring not only *Lazarus*, but his

his own five Brothers, and their dangerous Condition.

The pauſe that *Didymus* made, after theſe words, invited *Theodora* to tell him: Since, generous *Didymus*, I have obſerv'd our ſoundeſt Teachers to be of differing opinions about the Subject of your Diſcourſe, and that they do not look upon it as an Article of Faith, either that the Bleſſed do, or that they do not, know one another in Heaven; I preſume I may be allow'd to think, that if they do, (which I know is the moſt receiv'd Opinion) they do it in likelihood with other ſentiments than we commonly imagine. For, when the beloved Diſciple teaches, that, though *we be here the Children of God, it does not yet appear what we ſhall be*; and adds only in general, that, *when our Saviour*, or that Bleſs'd State, *ſhall be manifeſted*, we ſhall be like Him: When, I ſay, I reflect on this, and ſome things of the ſame import; I

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am prone to fear, that we judge too much of our future glorious State, by wrong measures, taken from our present frail and mean Condition. And I am apt to think, that we must stay till we come to Heaven, before we shall frame *Ideas* suitable to the Prerogatives of its Bless'd Inhabitants. I think our Notions will then be rais'd, as well as our Dust; and our Love, and other Affections, will be transfigur'd, as well as our Bodies. If we know one another, though our mutual Love may perhaps be greater than it ever was on Earth, yet it will not be upon the former Accounts; but will be as well better grounded, as better regulated. That external Beauty, pursues the fair Speaker, that here is so much doted on and overvalu'd, will there be found so much inferiour to that of every Glorify'd Body, that the difference and degrees of it will be very inconsiderable, and unable to make differing impressions on those that shall

ſhall remember them: As the refulgent ſplendor of the Sun obſcures all the Stars, and keeps our eyes from being any more affected by the greateſt and brighteſt, than by any of the reſt. So that our kindneſs to one another will be very little grounded upon External Qualities, which will there either ceaſe, or be eclips'd; nor upon ſecular Relations, which will there affect us far leſs, than our being nearly related to our common Lord; our reſemblance to whom will be the chief, as well as juſteſt Ground of our mutual eſteem and affection. When Children of the ſame Parents have been early parted, and long bred in diſtant places; though when they are grown men and women, they chance to meet again, 'tis obſerv'd, that at firſt they know not one another any more than meer ſtrangers: and when they are inform'd of their Relation, 'tis not the little accidents that happen'd to them at play; nor ſome features, that

that perhaps pleas'd one of them in the others Face, but are now very much chang'd by Time and Growth; that produce their new kindneſs: but the knowledge that they are Children of the ſame Father, and their finding in each other perſonal qualities, fit to adorn their preſent State, and thereby to challenge kindneſs and eſteem. And if ſome years abſence can produce ſo great a Change, as to make our neareſt Relations unknowable by us; and make us look with pity, on the fondneſſes that trifles produc'd in us in our infancy: What Changes, may we think, muſt be made on thoſe that convers'd together upon Earth, when after numerous ages, they ſhall meet in Heaven, with minds as much chang'd and improv'd as their bodies will then be? Shall we not by the grounds of a vertuous Complacency, be more affected and united, than we are now by natural Relations, or by external Beauty, and thoſe other trifles

trifles that here produce the greateſt Fondneſſes?

But *Theodora*, (anſwers the ſurpriz'd *Didymus*) can you be ſo rigid as to think, that pure and vertuous Affections cannot be admitted into Heaven; ſince the Scripture informs us, that not only Joy & Deſire are to be found even among the Angels, (who are ſaid to rejoyce at a ſinners Converſion, and deſire to pry into the Myſteries of our Religion) but Care and Actings for oppoſite Ends; (as when the Angel of *Perſia* withſtood *Michael*, and the Angel that talk'd to *Daniel*.) *Dan.* 10. 13.

I do not abſolutely deny, *Theodora* replies, that the Bleſſed know one another in Heaven. And, ſaies ſhe, with a light change of colour, I am ſo far inclin'nd to believe it is true, as, for *Didymus*'s ſake, to wiſh it ſo. But, as I lately told you, Iam not apt to think, the ſentiments occaſion'd

caſion'd by that knowledge, will be ſuch as moſt men imagine. Beſides thoſe Reaſons that you have ingeniouſly laid together, I think your perſwaſion of the Saints mutual knowledge the more probable, becauſe it ſeems not readily conceivable, how at the great Day of Judgement, the Juſtice of God, in rewarding and puniſhing particular Vertues and Crimes, can be manifeſted to the world, without diſcovering the Perſons by whom they were perform'd: Since Perſonal Circumſtances do very much alter the nature of moral Actions. And ſince the happy reſidents in heav'n, will have an eternity alow'd them to converſe with one another in; it ſeems highly probable, that in their various Conferences, they will meet with, at leaſt ſometime or other, occaſions, that by leſs ſagacity than their enlightened minds will then be endow'd with, may be improv'd to the diſcovery of the Perſons they were formerly acquainted

acquainted with. But on the other ſide, (continues *Theodora*) we ſhall have ſuch noble and charming Entertainments to employ our attention, as will engroſs it from the little and deſpicable Objects, (as we ſhall then think them) that now amuſe or buſie us; as when we behold ſuch a pompous Solemnity as a *Roman* Triumph, the variety of ſplendid and magnificent Objects, that Succeſſively preſent themſelves to cur view, make us ſo intent upon thoſe ſurprizing Spectacles, that even the neareſt and deareſt Relations, though perhaps gazing at the ſame Sight, out of the ſame windows, are apt to forget one another. And (continues ſhe) even when the Saints actually know and remember one another, they may love and converſe, upon terms very differing from thoſe, that were ſuitable to their mortal Condition. Yes, *Didymus*, (adds ſhe) *As* there will be no ſuch difference of Ages and Sexes, in Heaven, as

there are on Earth; ſince all ſhall there be *like the Angels*, and have *Bodies conform'd to the Glorious Body of their Redeemer*: *So*, the Rational Friendſhips, that will be practis'd in that happy Place, will receive their meaſures from the new and perſonal Excellencies of the Friends; from their being Rivals in the Love of God; and from their differing degrees of reſemblance to Him, that is the *Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of His Perſon.* But, concludes *Theodora*, we need not ſpend more time in diſcourſing conjecturally about Queſtions, wherein the Change, we are now going to make, will ſoon bring us to be reſolv'd. And in the mean time, we may well reſt ſatisfy'd, with this aſſurance, That, ſince Heaven is a Place, or State, where we ſhall be Bleſs'd with the *Fulneſs of Joy*; to know and converſe with each other, will be there found, either a part of our Felicity, or not neceſſary to it.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

WHilſt *Didymus* and his excellent Miſtreſs, ſtood waiting, till the infamous Miniſters of the *Preſidents* Cruelty, had prepar'd all things requiſite to the Execution of his barbarous Sentence; among thoſe many *Roman* Soldiers that were aſſembled there, to be ſpectators of the approaching Tragedy, an Officer, whom his own Gallantry had ſtrongly inclin'd to ſympathize with a Perſon, in whom he ſaw that Quality ſo Eminent, thought himſelf oblig'd to attempt the diſwading him, from perſiſting in ſo fatal a Reſolution as he had taken. Wherefore, approaching our Martyr, with very obliging looks and geſtures, and drawing him aſide, The Gods, ſayes he, can bear me wit-

neſs, generous Youth, that 'tis not without ſome amazement, and more trouble, than any affliction of my own has been wont to give me, that I ſee the Poſſeſſor of ſo much Gallantry, upon the point to be deſtroy'd by an unhappy Conſtancy, which, though in other caſes a vertue, muſt, being exercis'd againſt the Gods, become a Crime. And therefore, I cannot but ardently wiſh, that after having ſhewn ſo much Patience and Courage, you would at length expreſs your Prudence too, by letting your ſelf be perſwaded to a Compliance, that may reſcue you at once from Impiety and from Death.

An advice, anſwers *Didymus*, that is propos'd with ſo much kindneſs and civility, and yet preſs'd but by ſuch unſatisfying Reaſons, does juſtly deſerve my thanks for it, but not my compliance with it. For the Argument you bring againſt my Conſtancy to the Truth, is only,

ly, that my perſiſting in it will coſt me my Life; which is a proof indeed, that the Religion I profeſs, will lead me into Danger, but none at all, that it has miſled me into Error.

'Tis altogether extrinſick and accidental to a Religions being true or falſe, that its Embracers happen to be encourag'd by Preferments, or expos'd to Perſecutions. Fear is but an ill Counſellor in matters of Religion, unleſs it be the fear of chuſing a bad one, or living unworthy of a good one. He deſerves not the Bleſſing of having made a good choice among Religions, that does more ſeek in his choice, the Concernments of his Life, than of his Soul. And as 'tis only for its being the true one, that we ſhould make choiee of our Religion: So having once choſen it, nothing ſhould make us deſert it, but a conviction of its being erroneous, and conſequently of its wanting that Truth, whoſe appearance made us

embrace it. If therefore, you can ſhew me, that the *Chriſtian* Religion is falſe, or that yours is better; I am not ſo in love with wandring, as to go on in a wrong way, becauſe I once have, by weakneſs or misfortune, been miſled into it. But if your Arguments be but menaces, or any thing that is of that ſort, which can only manifeſt, that the power is on your ſide, but do not at all evince, that the truth is not on mine; I muſt look upon what you urge, as not deſerving to be comply'd with, but contemn'd. And if it were not my cuſtom never to take any thing ill, that I think is meant well, I ſhould eſteem my ſelf not a little injur'd, by the argument you employ to make me abandon Chriſtianity. Since, if a perſon leſs civil and gallant had made uſe of it, I ſhould conclude, that he muſt ſuppoſe me a Coward, to hope, by ſuch perſwaſions to make a Proſelyte. And though I were leſs aſſur'd than I am, of the Truth of

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the Religion I have alwaies own'd; yet would I not for all the world, on this occaſion, by profeſſing yours, deſert it: Leaſt by forſaking it, when I am threaten'd for ſticking to it; I ſhould procure my ſelf a diſquieting temptation to ſuſpect, that I did not deal ſincerely and impartially in chuſing a Religion; ſince I made choice of one, that I judg'd not worthy to be dy'd for.

You miſtake my intentions, Generous *Didymus*, replies the *Roman*, if you think I pretended to fright you into Apoſtacy: my Vertue would as little allow me to have ſo unworthy a deſign, as your Courage would permit a hope, that it ſhould be ſuccesful. But looking upon my ſelf, as having made a right choice in that worſhip of the Gods, I make profeſſion of, I could not think it injurious to you, to perſwade you, rather to Live in the profeſſion of a true Religion, than to Dye for that of a falſe one. And ſince my

concerns for your ſafety, and the little time you have to deliberate, oblige me to ſpeak freely to you; I cannot but wonder, that a Perſon that hath courted Honour at the rate you have done, ſhould loſe himſelf, for One, whom the moſt Sacred Perſons of his own Nation, crucified as a Malefactor; and who has been ſo ill natur'd, as to invite his Followers, both by expreſs words, and by the nature of the Religion he fram'd, which could not but be Perſecuted, to involve themſelves with him in the like unhappy fate.

The Notions (replies *Didymus*, ſomewhat nettled at this Diſcourſe) that Idolaters frame to themſelves, of the nature of the Chriſtian Religion, are commonly as erroneous, as the ways they take to confute it, are improper, and inhumane: And they are uſually no leſs miſinform'd about the Grounds and Myſteries of our Religion, than they are miſtaken about

about the Objects of their own Adorations. 'Tis true, that the Divine Person I adore, being sent from God his Father, to be the great Prophet and Reformer of the World, did, with a Prophetick Freedom, as well as Authority, sharply rebuke the Superstitions of the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees, among whom he convers'd; and did not more unmask their Hypocrisie, and reproach their Practices, by the Light of his Doctrine, than by the shining actions of a most exemplary and unblemish'd Life. And his Holiness having exasperated these impious Hypocrites, that found their Authority undermin'd, and their Persons discredited by him: As their malice was too great, not to attempt the Destruction of such an Enemy; so his Constancy was too great, to suffer him to decline the greatest dangers, by declining to persist in the wonted exercise of his Vertues; whereby he thus became expos'd to a Death, which he foresaw, and fre-

frequently foretold, and which he alſo willingly underwent, to procure Everlaſting Life, for thoſe who ſhould believe in him, and ſtrive to imitate him.

And that his Death, whereunto he ſubmitted to expiate the ſins of *others*, was not inflicted on him for his *own*, was evident, by his being abſolv'd, not only by the very Judge, to whom a Criminal fear of his Accuſers indicted the Sentence he pronounc'd againſt him, but by that Supreme and Infallible Judge, *God himſelf*; who declar'd by aſtoniſhing Prodigies, both in Heaven and Earth, how much he was diſpleas'd with thoſe, that put his Son to Death;& by raiſing him from the Dead within three days, to an Immortal Life, proclaim'd how dear he was to him,and gave him Power, to make his Followers Partakers of that glorious condition he himſelf was advanc'd to. So that (continues *Didymus*) thoſe Champions

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of his, whom he vouchsafes to single out from the rest of his Followers, and call to Martyrdom, have reason enough to look upon that Call, as an invaluable Honour, and a Priviledge: Since, as they are thereby made more conformable to him, in chearfully dying for Truth and Constancy; so they will be made more plentiful sharers in those inestimable advantages, that his own meritorious Martyrdom procur'd him. Yes, for those to whom he vouchsafes the Power and Honour of Suffering for Him, and of imitating him, for the interest of Truth and Piety; he does not only reserve such future Recompences, to crown their Love and Fidelity, but often gives them here such happy foretasts, in a perfect assurance of it, that I cannot but look upon it, as a vast accession to that immense Love, that made him dye for Us, that he calls and inables us to dye for Him.

I confeſs, (*Didymus* adds in purſuit of his Diſcourſe) that, as he took upon him the form of a Man, ſo he ſuffer'd himſelf to be us'd as good Men too often are. But his miraculous power and goodneſs, ſufficiently proclaim'd, that he was not thrown down from Heaven to Earth, as your Vulcan is ſaid to have been, but that he deſcended from Heaven, to make Men live an heavenly life: Nor did he, like many of your Deities, eſpecially your *Jupiter*, aſſume an humane ſhape, to do actions below the dignity of humane Nature; but he taught Men a Doctrine, worthy, as well as likely, to be brought from Heaven; and gave them an exemplary life, whoſe imitation would fit them to be tranſlated thither: And then ſubmitted to the Torments and Infamy of the Croſs, to purchaſe for his followers, by his Death, that heavenly condition, for which he had qualified them, by his Spirit and his Life.

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The *Roman* Officer, not yet quite diſcourag'd, by the unſuccesfulneſs he had hitherto met with in his attempt, reſolv'd to proſecute it yet further, by ſaying: The ſame reaſon, that ſomewhat leſſens my wonder at your deſpiſing Death, for your erroneous Religion, encreaſes my admiration at your unconcernedneſs, to avoid the kind of Death that threatens your obſtinacy. For though the love of glory, may invite a gallant Man, like *Didymus*, to part with his life for the attainment of it; yet that ſame heroick paſſion, ought to make thoſe it poſſeſſes, more apprehenſive than others of thoſe Extremities, wherein Death is accompany'd with Infamy, and made juſty terrible with ignominious Circumſtances; of which, none can be more diſgraceful, than the receiving it at the baſe hand of a common Executioner.

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The Weakneſs and Examples of your Gods (replies *Didymus*) have too much ſeduced you, to make Eſtimates of Good and Evil, by thoſe popular and pitiful meaſures, that I cannot but think very unworthy to be acquieſc'd in by a Chriſtian; who, to merit that Title, muſt be ſomewhat more than an ordinary Man. We judge of good and evil Actions, by the Laws of God, and right Reaſon, not by thoſe of Men in Power. And therefore do not think, that Conſtancy ceaſes to be a Vertue, and conſequently an honourable, not a diſgraceful quality, becauſe legal Tyrants will call it Obſtinacy, and condemn Men for it, to the ſame Puniſhments that are allotted to diſhonourable Actions. The reſpect our Religion commands us to pay to a Civil Magiſtrate, though a Perſecutor, permits us not by force to reſiſt his unjuſt Sentences. But this Submiſſion of ours, does not at all keep his Sentences from being unjuſt, nor

nor forbid us to think them ſo; and conſequently leaves us the ineſtimable ſatisfaction of our Conſciences, that inwardly abſolve us, when outward Judges condemn us. And for proof of this, you cannot but have taken notice, that, whereas truly Criminal, Perſons being conſcious of their own Guilt, either deny what they are accuſed of, or endeavour by all means, to palliate it, and to avoid the being condem'd for it. We Chriſtians, on the contrary, do not only Confeſs what you call a Crime, but Glory in It; and do not deprecate the fate, that attends our Conſtancy. Nor can it fright us from undergoing Death, for a glorious Cauſe, that we muſt receive it from an Infamous Hand. For that by which we eſtimate it, is, the quality of the action that procures it, not the condition of him that is employ'd to inflict it: And, ſo we can conſider with joy, *for what*, we are not much troubled to ſee, *by whom*, it is that we ſuffer; being

being ſatisfied, that the Executioners hand may deſtroy a Malefactor, but cannot make one; and if the Cauſe that brings a Man to the Scaffold, be not culpable, the place cannot make the Death that is there ſuffered, infamous: Nay, and if Vertue leads him thither, the Inſtruments of his Death, cannot keep it from being Glorious; ſince this demonſtrates the Sufferers unſhaken Conſtancy to be inſuperable, not only by Death, but by that which many have embrac'd Death to ſhun, the Contempt of the generality of Men. Your gallant Roman Commander (*Attilius Regulus*) is much leſs remembred and celebrated, for all his Military Exploits and Attempts, than for the Cruel Death he ſuffer'd, by order of the *Carthaginians*, to whom, in performance of a Promiſe, he yielded himſelf up, with expectation of ſome ſuch barbarous Uſage as he met with. And ſure, as a ſubmiſſion to Indignities, was a duty not meanly

meanly glorious in him, to ſhun the breaking of his Word to his Enemies; the like reſignation of themſelves, will not, by unbyaſs'd Judges, be thought an Action diſhonourable in Chriſtians, to prevent the violation of their Faith, ſolemnly given, not to a Savage Enemy, but to a Divine Friend, who has already, without any obligation to do it, ſuffered more ſhame for them, than the ſublimity of his condition leaves it poſſible for them to ſuffer for him. And *though* that Greek Philoſopher, *Socrates*, whom your own Oracles, with more of Truth than they are wont to be guilty of, pronounc'd the wiſeſt of Men, was by his own Fellow-Citizens condemn'd to die by Poyſon, brought him by the hand of an Executioner: *Yet*, ſince that Sentence was not occaſioned by his Crimes, but his Vertues, the deadly draught did not deſtroy his Fame with his Life; and poyſon'd not his Reputation, which it extremely heightned,

but that of his Accuſers, and his Judges; whom after Ages have look'd upon, as worſe Criminals than ever they Condemned, and more unworthy Perſons, than thoſe they employed to execute their Sentence. And for my part, (continues *Didymus*) ſome paſſages of our ſacred Records encourage me to expect, that, if a Poſthume Fame be ſuch a Bleſſing, as many imagine, the Indignities we ſuffer now, will hereafter procure it us. For I cannot but hope, and methinks I foreſee, that the *Roman* Eagles will one day ſtoop to the Croſs of Chriſt: And the Temples of your Falſe Deities, will be conſecrated to the Service of the True God. The Sword of the Civil Magiſtrate, which is now the great and only ſucceſsful Argument on your ſide, will be then in Chriſtian hands, which I wiſh may never employ it againſt your Religion; whoſe ruine will not require the active oppoſition of Power, but the bare withdrawing

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of its preſerving Support. And then poſterity, more enlightned and more juſt, will read the Hiſtory of thoſe Deſtroyers of the Baptized (which is, at leaſt, the innocenter) part of Mankind, with the ſame reſentments, with which they will read the havocks made by Wars, Plagues, Maſſacres, and other publick Calamities.

CHAP. X.

THeſe Replies of *Didymus* made an end of convincing the Perſon, that occaſion'd them, that our Martyrs reſolution was not to be ſhaken, either by threats or perſwaſions.

But yet the officious *Roman*, cheriſhing ſome hope, that, if *Didymus* ſhould ſee his Miſtreſs ready to be kill'd by an infamous hand; that Beauty, which had conquered his heart, would ſoften it, and thereby make it capable of relenting impreſſions; thought fit to make him one addreſs more, and tell him; It is not without extreme regret, that I ſee your inflexible obſtinacy defeat all my endeavours to procure your ſafety. But though your miſtaken gallan-

gallantry, may make you think it unhandſom in a Soldier, to diſclaim a threatned opinion, that he once adher'd to, leſt the change ſhould be imputed to Fear or Levity; yet I hope you will not think, that the ſtrict rules of that deſtructive Gallantry, ought to oblige a young Lady, in whoſe Sex, Courage is, at leaſt, an unrequired, if not an altogether improper, Vertue. And therefore, I hope you will not refuſe to ſecond my Endeavours, to perſwade her, not to throw herſelf out of a World, of whoſe grandeurs and pleaſures, her tranſcendent Beauty promiſes her an extraordinary ſhare, as well as her Youth fits her to reliſh them perfectly, and enjoy them long.

Didymus, though at firſt ſomewhat ſurpriz'd at this motion, took no long time to return anſwer, by ſaying; I confeſs, I cannot partake of the trouble you are pleas'd to expreſs, for the not prevailing of your

Endeavours to alter my Reſolutions. For though the advice you preſs'd upon me, was obliging in you to give, yet it would have been Criminal for me to take it.

And as for what you propoſe, in reference to *Theodora*, I muſt deſire to be excus'd from making myſelf acceſſory to your deſign of tempting her. For, in my opinion, he that ſolicites another, to what he believeth a Crime, doth become guilty of one; ſo that, as to what concerns *Theodora*, without being at all ſure of ſhaking her Vertue, I ſhould moſt certainly ruine my own innocence. Yet I cannot think (ſays the *Roman*, interrupting him,) but if you would enforce *my* perſwaſions with *yours*, the Intereſt you have in her, would prevail to make her rather accept of Life, than deny a Perſon, that ſhe owes ſo much to; and does not leſs highly, than juſtly, value.

If (replies *Didymus*) I ſhould yield to uſe ſo Criminal means, as to give her an Example of the Apoſtacy, you would have me invite her to; the attempt would be leſs improbable: But for me to perſwade her to what I am juſt going to give a convincing proof, that I believe to be worſe than Death; would make her both hate me, and deſpiſe me. And to convince you, that ſuch a Motion as you would have me make, would loſe me all the ſhare I may have in her good opinion; I will dare to own to you, that if I thought her capable, I ſay not of endeavouring to ſeduce me, but of being ſeduced by me, my eſteem of her would alter upon her change: And though I could not deny my wonder to ſo rare a Maſter-piece of Nature, as is her viſible part; yet there would be a vaſt difference betwixt a meer admiration of external Beauty, which muſt become the Trophy of Age or Death; and that high veneration, that I now

pay to that admirable Perſon's intrinſick Worth, and unconquerable Vertue.

Nor ſhould you doubt (continues *Didymus*) of the Entertainment, that ſuch a Piety as hers, would give ſuch a Motion as you would have me make; ſince it would juſtly give her a higher reſentment of *my* ſolicitations, than of all the importunities of her Heathen *Perſecutors*: for theſe do but adviſe her to decline Danger, by embracing what they think Truth; whereas that which you would have me to perſwade her to, is, to purchaſe her ſafety, by renouncing, what *I*, as well as *She*, know to be Truth: And I doubt not, that ſuch a proceeding would ſo highly offend her, as to enable her, by a bare Pardon, to acquit herſelf of thoſe Reſpects and Services of mine, to which poſſibly a Perſon of her goodneſs vouchſafes ſome Title to *her* gratitude.

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There is (replies the *Roman*) ſo great a difference betwixt the caſe of a reſolv'd Soldier, that thinks himſelf in point of Reputation engag'd not to retreat, and that of a young Lady, from whom no Reſoluteneſs, much leſs Obſtinacy, can be expected, that I muſt yet think, our joynt perſwaſions, though unaſſiſted by your Example, would with-hold her from Death, now ſhe is near enough to it to ſee the horrors of it.

Nay, (rejoyns *Didymus*) I did not ſpeak what I have been ſaying about my own averſneſs, that I might hinder you from trying your Fortune, if you think fit, with *Theodora*'s Vertue. I do not envy her Conſtancy (whoſe ſucceſſes have been hitherto no fewer than its tryals) the honour of gaining more than one Victory, in one day. But what I have been ſaying, was, to give you one reaſon, of my refuſing to joyn with you in your propos'd attempt

attempt: againſt which I ſhall now offer this other reaſon, that I think it little leſs than impoſſible it ſhould ſucceed. For I thought I had already ſatisfied you, that as to my intereſt in *Theodora*, if it were much greater, than you, for want of knowing us both, imagine; ſo great a miſimployment of it, would make me juſtly forfeit it; and perſwaſions that would ſeduce her to Apoſtacy, inſtead of making her follow the Advice, would make her but deteſt the Adviſer. And as to the hopes, you ground on her ſeeing herſelf upon the point of paſſing out of the World; let me tell you, that the ſevere Exerciſes, to which her ſtrict Piety hath long accuſtomed her, have ſo diſingaged her affections from temporal things, that, being already mortified to the pleaſures and vanities of the World, Death can now do no more, but free her from the troubles and perſecutions of it. She hath employed a great part of her life, in preparing her-

herſelf to part with it joyfully, when-ever Nature or Vertue ſhall require it; and ſhe will find it very eaſie to lay it down for Religion, now ſhe is in a ſuffering Condition, when in her moſt flouriſhing one, ſhe found it enough to wean her from the love of the preſent life, that it detained her from the next. Great Vertues, ſuch as hers, are like great Rivers, which, the nearer they come to the Sea, where they are to end their courſe, the greater they are wont to grow, and the more difficult the ſtream is to be withſtood or hinder'd from its progreſs. *Theodora* now looks upon herſelf, as having but one ſtep more to make, to reach that Crown ſhe hath done and ſuffer'd ſo much for: And that glorious Object, viewed at ſo near a diſtance, ſo raviſhes and ſo poſſeſſes her Eyes, that ſhe will doubtleſs either not ſee, or not regard, any thing that would hinder or retard her taking poſſeſſion of it.

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Here the *Roman* Officer, ſomewhat impatient at *Didymus*'s Diſcourſe, would no longer forbear interrupting it, by telling him; To hear you ſpeak, one would imagine, that you are not talking of a young Lady, but of ſome ancient Heroe, that had been long accuſtom'd to deſpiſe the Frowns of Fortune, and keep himſelf from over-valuing her ſmiles.

Heroick Vertue (replies *Didymus*) does as little know Sexes, as doth the Soul wherein it properly reſides. A habitude cannot always be Eſſential to the Nature of an Heroick Action: Since the firſt of that kind that one does, is not the conſequent, but the beginning, of a a habitude: And a ſincere and ſettled reſolution to be highly vertuous, may make a Woman (as well as a Man) to *be*, that which the nobleſt ſubſequent Actions can but declare her to *have been*. And a Perſon that, like *Theodora*, acts by the aſſiſtance,

ſiſtance, and as in the preſence, of the Deity, may, to maintain her Loyalty to God, and her Title to the ineſtimable Rewards he hath promis'd to perſevering Piety, both act and ſuffer greater things, than thoſe very Heroes you talk of were put upon, by ſuch barely humane Motives, as Cuſtom, Ambition, or Revenge. And particularly, as to the point of perſeverance againſt Menaces, and Proffers; theſe are not like to prevail againſt the Conſtancy of Chriſtians much leſs poſſeſs'd with Divine Love and Hope, than *Theodora* is. And indeed, there can be nothing upon Earth capable to bribe Them, to let go the Joys of Heaven, that ſee themſelves entring upon the Poſſeſſion, and find themſelves ſenſible of the ineſtimable Value of them.

Wherefore (concludes *Didymus*) you will not, I preſume, think it ſtrange, that I refuſe to joyn with you, in a Deſign, that I could not

ſo

ſo much as attempt, either with Hope, or without a Crime; and that thinking it worthier of my Endeavors, to imitate *Theodora*'s Conſtancy, than to ſeduce her from it, I chuſe rather to be a ſharer in the Triumphs of her Vertue, than a Trophy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THis reſolute Concluſion, oblig'd the *Roman* Officer to break off a Converſation, whereby he plainly ſaw, there was no cauſe to hope he could ſhake the Conſtancy of *Didymus*; and much cauſe to fear, that *Didymus*'s Conſtancy and his Diſcourſes, would ſtagger many of the Heathen Auditors. And therefore withdrawing himſelf, much diſcontented at the unſuccesfulneſs of his perſwaſions, he thought it would be impious, to make any interceſſion, for Perſons he judg'd invincibly obſtinate, or divert the fatal Proceedings of the Judge; who having by this time made an end of thoſe other Affairs, whoſe diſpatch *Theodora*'s reſpite was not to outlaſt; call'd for the innocent Cri-

Criminals, and, with a ſtern Countenance and Voice, demanded, whether they were yet willing, to appeaſe the Deities they had provok'd; and by burning Incenſe to them, endeavour to attone for the Affronts they had offer'd them. Adding, that there was now no more time left for deliberating, but that they muſt immediately renounce thir Impious Religion, or ſuffer Death for it.

But this could not ſhake the illuſtrious Priſoners Conſtancy; which prompted them to make, with as much haſte as the *Preſident* could deſire, an anſwer, that conſiſted but of a ſhort and reſolute declaration; That they had liv'd Worſhippers of Chriſt; and had a thouſand times rather die, than ceaſe to be, or to profeſs themſelves ſuch: And that for the falſe Gods, the *Preſident* would have them adore; they had rather be their Victims, than their Suppliants; and

and fall Sacrifices to them, than offer them any.

This bold profeſſion, ſo incens'd the perſon 'twas made to, that he immediately gave order, that the Priſoners ſhould be led away to the place of Execution; and that the Miniſters of Juſtice, (as he miſnamed his Cruelty) ſhould, without delay, go on with the preparations that were making, to deſtroy them. But while theſe Officers were ſolicitous to obey thoſe Commands, *Theodora* took the opportunity, to tell the generous Companion of her Sufferings: It was fit, I confeſs, when we diſcours'd with Infidels, to recommend the Objects of our hopes, by giving them the glorious Titles of Crowns, and Triumphs; ſince being to defend the reaſonableneſs of our Conſtancy, by the greatneſs of the rewards we expect for it; 'twas very proper to repreſent thoſe Cœleſtial Recompences, under the

notion of ſuch Goods, as thoſe we argued with, acknowledged to be the moſt noble and deſirable. But, (continues ſhe) when we ſpeak of Heaven among our ſelves, give me leave to tell you, that I think we ſhould look upon it under a very differing notion; and make a wide diſparity betwixt the Chriſtians *Paradiſe*, and the Poets *Elyſium*. The Triumphs we ſhould moſt deſire in Heaven, ſhould be, not over our outward Enemies, or perſonal Sufferings, but over Sin and Ignorance, and the frailties of our Natures, and the imperfections of our Vertues. And the poſitive Bleſſings that ſhould moſt endear Heaven to us, ſhould be, not ſo much that we ſhall there be Crown'd by *Chriſt*, as that we ſhall live with him, and *follow that ſpotleſs Lamb where ever he goes*; That our gratitude it ſelf ſhall be perfect, as well as the Bleſſings that engage it ſhall be compleat; and That we ſhall have an eternal

Day

Day, to contemplate that *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, without having that glorious Object veil'd by any interpoſing Cloud, much leſs hid from us by the viciſſitudes of day and night. In ſhort, I think, Devotion ſhould in our future State, aſpire to other things, than thoſe that may be the Objects of meer Ambition.

And now, generous *Didymus*, (adds *Theodora*) ſince we are entering upon the laſt ſcene of our mortal Life; let us, (I beſeech you) ſummon together and rouſe up all the Graces and Vertues we have receiv'd from Heaven, and fervently implore both an encreaſe of them, and a ſupply of any that our preſent Circumſtances require; That we may go off the Stage Piouſly, as well as Handſomly, and both act and ſuffer as becomes Chriſtian Martyrs. Let not any Crueltys or Affronts of our inſulting Perſecutors, be able to diſcom-

poſe us; but let our evenneſs of mind convince them, that they can as little diſorder us in our way to Heaven, as hinder us to get to our Journey's end. But let not our undauntedneſs appear the effect of ſullenneſs, or fierceneſs, or of meer reſolvedneſs; but let it be ſo calm and charitable, that we may not be ſuſpected to be the Martyrs, rather of our Glory, or our Courage, than of our Religion. Let it not be thought that we hate life, or deſpiſe it, but only that we think it a cheap purchaſe for Heaven, and for the honour of owning and following a Redeemer, who, to merit it for us, took the Croſs in his way thither.

Admonitions ſo becoming a dying Chriſtian, receiv'd ſuch an entertainment, as the Piety of it, and the Veneration he had for the giver, might juſtly challenge, from ſo devout and elevated a Soul as that of *Didymus*: whoſe reſolute anſwers

ſwers to the *Roman* Officer, together with his behaviour, as well ſince as before he made them, leaving his Enemies no more expectation that he could be prevail'd with, either to alter his own reſolution, or tempt his Miſtreſs to change hers; he was appointed to be firſt led away to Execution: that the ſight of his Blood might terrifie *Theodora*, and fright her into a care to preſerve her own. This reſolution of his Enemies, did not at all leſſen his; but having eaſily obtain'd leave, from the *Roman* Officers, that could not but admire his Gallantry, and ſomewhat compaſſionate his condition, to ſay a few words to *Theodora*: He went to that excellent Perſon; and approaching her with a far greater reſpect, than he would ſhew to any Power, that could but preſerve that life, which the *Romans* were going to take from him: He told her: Your Piety, Madam, and your Example, making me preſume,

that upon ſuch an occaſion as this, I may with your conſent, part with a life, which ever ſince I had the Fate to ſee you, has been ſo much at your diſpoſal; I am now going without reluctancy to perform that laſt duty, whereto Religion calls me. But thinking my ſelf oblig'd, to begin with the moſt difficult part of my Martyrdom, before I bid farewel to the World, my enclination and reſpect, brings me to take my laſt leave of the faireſt and excellenteſt Perſon in it. If, Madam, (ſo he proceeds) I were in a condition of paying you any further dutys, my humble requeſt to you would be, to have the honour of your further Commands. But ſince my condition leaves me not a capacity of ſerving you for the future, one of my laſt Petitions to you muſt be, to be pleas'd to look upon my paſt Services, as extremely ſhort of the deſires of a Perſon, that lov'd you with as much ardency, as your Charms themſelves could kindle;

kindle; and yet with ſo pure a flame, that had it been viſible, even *Theodora*'s Vertue, could not have diſapprov'd it. But Madam, (continues he) although to reſcue you from the condition you are in, there is no danger ſo deſperate that I would not joyfully attempt, if I were again at liberty, and tho' it were poſſible I could ſurvive you; yet I am too much concern'd for the nobler part of *Theodora*, to wiſh, ſhe would blemiſh ſo ſpotleſs a life to ſave it. Only, Madam, give me leave to be ſo kind and Charitable to the World, as to wiſh that Providence may find ſome expedient, to preſerve for you, both your Crown and your Head; and that you may arrive ſo late at Heaven, as to have time to bleſs the Earth with a long and Exemplary Life; and may you lead it with as much Tranquillity, as you will with Vertue; and without knowing ſo much as that trouble, which, I fear, your gene-

rous compaſſion may now and then offer to give you, upon the remembrance of the faithfuleſt of your Servants.

Theſe words, and the ſad occaſion of them, having drawn ſome Tears into *Theodora*'s fair Eyes; though the cauſe of them made them very obliging to *Didymus*, yet his concern for her quiet, preſently engag'd him to help her to ſuppreſs them, by making haſte to tell her, that 'twas pity the ſerenity of her mind and looks, which Vertue had ſtill kept calm, and even Perſecutions had not been able to diſorder, ſhould be diſcompos'd by any other thing. And Madam, (continues he) though, being confident that your charity will make it unneceſſary for me to beg your Prayers, I was going to make it my petition to you, that you would vouchſafe now and then to caſt a thought on the memory of a Perſon, to whoſe mind you

you were conſtantly preſent: Yet, I muſt now retract that humble requeſt, unleſs you are pleas'd to grant it me with this qualification; That the honour you do me, may not be diſquieting to you. For how great a bleſſing ſoever it is, to enjoy a place in your thoughts; yet an *Idea* muſt repreſent quite another man than *Didymus*, that ſhould, eſpecially on its own ſcore, become troubleſome to *Theodora*; whoſe compaſſion is as well needleſs, as undeſired; ſince 'tis injurious both to her ſelf and me, to look upon Him as a perſon to be pitied, that is going to receive the honour and ſatisfaction, to ſuffer in her ſight, what he ſuffers partly for her ſervice. And the place he implores but in her favourable not her mournful thoughts, willgive him the nobleſt and deſirableſt Being, that he can have upon Earth, when he ſhall be in Heaven.

The things which *Didymus* ſaid, and

and the pathetical way he ſaid them in, did not leave the fair Perſon they were addreſs'd to, all the unmov'dneſs of mind, ſhe us'd to be Miſtreſs of on other occaſions. And conſidering theſe as the laſt and dying words of an accompliſh'd Gentleman, that had ſo highly ſerv'd and lov'd her, ſhe could not hinder her reſentments from making her, on ſuch an occaſion, remit ſomewhat of her wonted reſerv'dneſs. Wherefore with Eyes, wherein though ſhe endeavour'd to ſuppreſs Tears, ſhe diſclos'd an extraordinary Grief; and with Looks, wherein both Gratitude and Obligedneſs diſplay'd themſelves; ſhe told him, If I look'd upon your Vertue, generous *Didymus*, as one that were but ſomewhat extraordinary, I ſhould think my ſelf oblig'd to make excuſes; and ſeek your pardon for having been, though undeſignedly, ſo acceſſory to the early loſs of a life, ſo worthy to be a long one. But what you

have

have this day done, makes me apprehend that ſuch Diſcourſes, would not be very pleaſing, to one that delights in ſuch Actions. But do not think, I conjure you, that, though I cannot pretend to merit or requite Services of ſo unuſual a ſtrain as yours, I can be inſenſible, how much I owe to them, not only upon the ſcore of their greatneſs, but upon that of the handſom and generous way wherein you did them. For (continues ſhe, with a colour that ſomewhat expounded the meaning of what ſhe was going to ſay) if after the Vertue and Gallantry you this day expreſs'd, Providence had thought fit to place me in a condition of making you Retributions, I will allow you to think, that in chuſing them for you, I ſhould have been very much, if not unreſervedly, guided by your wiſhes. Here ſhe paus'd a while, and bluſh'd the latter, that ſhe had ſaid, what to her niceneſs ſeem'd ſo much; and

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the former, to conſider whether he deſerv'd not to have more ſaid to him. But her obliging looks did ſo well ſecond and expound, her otherwiſe, ſomewhat indefinite words, that *Didymus*'s Heart readily underſtood the Language of her Eyes; and her Heart ſpoke ſo clearly in her Cheeks, ſomewhat that it ſcrupled to utter by her Tongue, that, expreſſing more than ſhe ſaid, without injuring her Modeſty ſhe righted her Gratitude: her paſſionate Admirer eſteeming himſelf more highly recompenc'd, by this permiſſion, to ſuppoſe her kindneſs than he would have done by the perfecteſt aſſurance of any others love: And fancying, that by the ſight of that new Fire that flaſh'd in her Cheeks, he could deſcern in her Breaſt ſuch a reſentment of his Services, as involv'd an approbation of their cauſe, and imply'd a peculiarity for his Perſon; he took thehigh eſt retribution he ever did, for the

the higheſt he ever could receive from a Lady, whoſe Beauty and Reſervedneſs were ſo great, that no favour of her granting, could appear little.

But *Theodora* quickly recovering the diſorder, this merited Declaration had put her into, made haſt to proſecute her diſcourſe, by adding, But 'tis my ſatisfaction, and will I hope, be yours, that, ſince you acted upon Religions ſcore, as well as mine, you will not want a recompence, greater than it had been poſſible for me to give you; ſince in reſcuing me upon a Chriſtian account, you have ſerv'd a Maſter, that is able moſt richly to reward, even *your* Performances and Sufferings: And doubt not *Didymus*, (continues ſhe) but that, when you ſhall once be poſſeſs'd of a Glorious and Immortal Crown in Heaven, you will have no cauſe, to be troubled, at your having, upon Earth, left a Crown of *Lawrel*,

rel, or miſs'd one of *Myrtle*. If I were to tarry, or rather languiſh, here below, as many years as your miſtaken kindneſs makes you wiſh me; your favours have been ſo extraordinary, that, without being guilty of an ingratitude that would be ſo too, I could never loſe the remembrance of them, nor omit paying you the higheſt acknowledgments, that the chief place, not only in my memory, but in my eſteem and friendſhip, could make you. But do not *Didymus*, I beſeech you, think of my Surviving you, when the holding out a few minutes longer for *Chriſt*, will introduce me into a Condition, where I ſhall ever ſee him, and never offend him. Let us then, (concludes ſhe) quit the thoughts of this World, that we are going ſo ſoon to quit, and begin to fix them on thoſe joys of another, that we are going to poſſeſs for ever; and during that little time, that is requiſite to go take our

Crowns,

Crowns, let us ſummon up all our powers, to contribute to a behaviour befitting ſuch Expectations. Let our laſt ſervices to Religion, be our nobleſt ones, that our Deaths may at leaſt adorn it, if not propagate it. Let us receive the laſt effects of our Perſecution, as perſons that do not deſerve ſuch an uſage, and are above the reach of it. Let us aſpire to *Chriſts* temper, in his cauſe; and ſuffer Like him, as we ſuffer For him: and then we need not doubt, but, in ſpight of this ſhort ſeparation we are yielding to for his Sake, we ſhall joyfully, and for ever, meet again, in a better place, and in an ineſtimably happier condition.

Theodora had ſcarce made an end of ſpeaking, when, all things being in a readineſs to put the Judges Sentence in Execution, they to whom that infamous employment was committed, came to bring

bring notice of it to *Didymus*, who, notwithſtanding the reluctancy he had, to part with the admirable, and now obliging, *Theodora*; thinking it would misbecome him, to ſtay for being preſs'd on ſuch an occaſion delay'd not, with all the reſolution he was able to aſſume, to take his laſt farewel of her. This cruel ſeparation, being not to have an end, before both their Lives, was ſolemniz'd by that excellent pair, with Geſtures and Expreſſions ſo ſenſible and moving, that, declining an account, which I could not attempt to give, without ſharing very much in a grief, that I ſhould be able, but very imperfectly, to deſcribe; I ſhall ſilently paſs over the Circumſtances of this ſad Separation, that more troubled the generous Lover, and perhaps his admirable Miſtreſs too, than that of Soul and Body, which was preſently to follow it. But *Didymus*, now finally parted from *Theodora*, whilſt he was moving towards

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the place of his Sufferings, having by the aſſiſtance of him, whoſe Religion call'd Him to them, aſſum'd a temper of mind, ſuitable to the glorious work he was going to undertake, and entirely diſpos'd himſelf, after having done all that became a Lover, to ſuffer as became a Chriſtian.

This was much the leſs difficult for him to do, becauſe his whole paſt life was an excellent preparative, to make him act the laſt ſcene of it worthily. For (to add ſomewhat on this occaſion, to the Character given of him in the firſt Book.) *Didymus* was a Perſon, in whom Divine Grace had produc'd ſo early a Piety, that he was a well grown Chriſtian, before he was come to be a full grown Man. And judging the moſt flouriſhing time of his Age, to be, for that reaſon, the fitteſt to be Devoted to the moſt worthy of Objects; He was enabl'd both to ſuppreſs

the heats of Youth, and deſpiſe the Vanities of the World; even while that uſually ungovern'd Age, made the former moſt impetuous, and gave the latter, the great endearment of Novelty. Nor did his being a Soldier, prove an Obſtacle to his Piety. The Examples of *Joſhua*, *David*, *Jonathan*, and other brave Warriers of the *Old Teſtament*, ſhew, that Heroick Valour, may be accompany'd with eminent Piety. And the firſt Proſelyte the Heathen World preſented to Chriſtianity, being a Captain, and continuing to be ſo after his Converſion; argues, that a Military ſtate of Life, is not inconſiſtent with the moſt innocent of Religions. And for *Didymus*; as he fought not out of Fierceneſs, or Avarice, or Ambition; but to exerciſe and improve his Vertue; ſo amidſt all his Military Conflicts, he was ſtill careful *To fight the good fight of Faith*: And being taught by the Holy Scripture, that

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The Life of Man here on Earth, *is a kind of Military one*: He us'd the *Roman* Camp as a School to a higher ſort of Warfare; where, as the hardſhips are greater, and the Victories more difficult, ſo the Crowns and Triumphs are incomparably more Valuable and Glorious. A Perſon thus qualify'd and diſpos'd, could not find it very uneaſie, *to* part, for his Religion, with a Life that he had led ſo well, and hazarded ſo often; nor *to* leave a World, That Sin and Perſecutions embitter'd, and That was preſently to be left by *Theodora*, that he might paſs to a place where they ſhould meet to be Crown'd. Wherefore, reſolving to ſhew that the approach of a reputedly infamous Death, was not able, either to ſhake his Conſtancy, or extinguiſh his Charity; he diſpos'd himſelf to mingle in his laſt Actions and Sufferings, the courage of a *Roman* Soldier, with the reſignment of a Chriſtian

Martyr. And accordingly, walking on towards the place of Execution, with a calmneſs and undauntedneſs, that could ſcarce have proceeded from a reſolution not ſtrengthen'd by Faith; as ſoon as He came thither, He look'd round about him upon the Guards, and other Aſſiſtants of this ſad Spectacle, in ſuch a way, as if He rather pity'd them, than lik'd the Pity, which many of them could not but by their Tears expreſs for Him, and diſcours'd to them with all the gracefulneſs, that Youth and Courage could give ſo extraordinary a Perſon. And becauſe he ſuppos'd, that (as 'twas uſual on ſuch occaſions of Concourſe) there were among the Spectators, ſome Military Men that were Chriſtians in their Hearts, though they had not been call'd to own it publickly; He addreſs'd himſelf particularly to them. And having premis'd, that he pretended not to inſtruct them as barely Chriſtians, becauſe

cauſe he doubted not, but he had been prevented by the weighty and moving Sermons of divers burning and ſhining Lights, and guiders of the Church: He told them, he would confine his advices to what was ſuitable to the condition he ſhar'd in with them, of being Chriſtian Soldiers. And then he briefly, but pathetically, exhorted them to all thoſe Vertues and practices, that might recommend both their Perſons, their Profeſſion, and their Religion. The laſt of which, by many Arguments, (which his example made the more Impreſſive) he perſwaded them, after having adorn'd it by their Lives, to confirm, if they were call'd to it, by their Deaths: Without forgetting, that the Fearful, are by the Scripture rank'd with the *Unbelievers*, as deſtin'd to the ſame place of Torment; and without fearing any unmerited diſgrace, ſo much as that deſerved one, threatn'd by *Revel.* 21. 8.

the *Captain of their Salvation*, to those that *shall deny him before Men.*

Heb. 11. 10.

He Exhorted them, by their Courage and Obsequiousness to convince their unbeleiving Superiors; that the valour of Christians could be eminently active, when their Religion did not confine it to be passive; and that when Enterprises, how dangerous soever, were as just and noble as difficult, they could emulate, if not outshine, the Gallantry of those Deify'd Heroes they refus'd to Worship. And lastly, having press'd them to be loyal to the *Emperor*, and obedient too, as far as was consistent with Fidelity to Him that made *him* so: He begg'd their Prayers for himself, and put up ardent ones of his own, for the Church, the State, his Persecutors, and particularly, for the excellent Companion of his Martyrdom. This said; he began to do what was to be done by him, towards the deliverance

verance of his Soul from his Body; and having done it with ſo much ſerenity of Mind and Looks, that he extorted an eſteem of his vertue, even from thoſe that deſtroy'd him him for it; he let the Executioner do his part too, (which probably, was done by taking off his Head) and in a moment paſs'd, from being a ſuffering Member of the Church Militant, to be a happy one of the Church Triumphant.

CHAP. XII.

THE Perſecutors of *Theodora*, hoping to intimidate her by ſo Tragick a Spectacle, had conducted her to a place, whence ſhe might ſee all that had paſs'd; of which 'twill eaſily be believ'd that ſhe had not been an unconcern'd Spectator: Her Vertue and Kindneſs making her a ſharer in his Sufferings, by ſympathiſing with him, and by endeavouring, as far as ſhe could, to relieve him by her moſt ardent Prayers; That his conſtancy under them might be Divinely Supported, and richly Crown'd. But while her thoughts were, with a Divine grief, Solemniſing her loſs; thoſe cruel Men that had procur'd it, being deſirous to make uſe of the terrifying impreſſions

preſſions they ſuppos'd ſhe had receiv'd, while they were freſh and recent, advanc'd to *Theodora*, bringing with them the purpoſely diſfigur'd remains of *Didymus*; and then told her, that ſhe was now convinc'd, that neither Youth nor Gallantry was able to protect, from the fatal anger of the Gods, thoſe that obſtinately refus'd to Worſhip them; and therefore they expected, that, by a ſeaſonable care of herſelf, ſhe would ſhun the imitation of ſo Tragical an Example. To this the fair Martyr replied, that ſhe was not at all ſurpriz'd at what had paſs'd, and therefore, ſhe knew not why ſhe ſhould be terrified by it. For *Didymus* and ſhe, and all other conſidering Chriſtians, that walk according to their Maſters directions, were wont deliberately to weigh the conſequences of embracing a ſtrict and perſecuted Religion, before they made Profeſſion of it: And having foreſeen what it might coſt

coſt them, and ſatisfied themſelves that it deſerv'd a yet higher Price; they were not diſcourag'd nor ſurpriz'd, to be put to pay that price; eſpecially, when it open'd to them an immediate paſſage to the poſſeſſion of what they gave it for. She added, that if the Example of the generous Martyr, were to have any operation upon her, it ought not to fright her from, but confirm her in, the profeſſion of a Religion, whoſe truth he thought worth dying for; and which, notwithſtanding all the handſome concerns he had for her preſervation, he would never ſpeak one word to perſwade her to decline, for the protracting of her Life. His Example, (continues *Theodora*) lets me ſee, that no violences upon Earth, are able to deſtroy a Courage that is aſſiſted from Heaven, and fights in view of the glories of it: And his Death manifeſts, how quick the paſſge may, be between this and an incomparably better

better Life; and clearly ſhews, how ſoon the utmoſt effect of your Cruelty, can place thoſe that deſpiſe it, above the reach of it. Then caſting her mournful Eyes upon the ſaddeſt Object that ever they beheld; If you ſhould, ſays ſhe, be ſo inhumane, as to exerciſe any further Cruelty upon this now inanimate Priſon, whence his glad Soul has Eſcap'd; you may intend him a miſchief, but he will not feel it, unleſs it be in the encreaſe of the recompences of his Martyrdom. You may, if you pleaſe, inſult over his dead Body; and thoſe whom his vertue made his Friends, may ſome of them be troubled at it: but while you are triumphing at his Death, and others are deploring it, I doubt not, but the welcomes and joys he receives in the bleſſed place he is gone to, make him happy enough, to pity not only thoſe that hate him, but thoſe that pity him too. What you ſhew me as the Trophy of your Power,

Power, I look upon, as that of his Conſtancy: and for what you preſume to be Your Victory, He will be really Crown'd. The Grave, (continues ſhe) is, I confeſs, a ſad Proſpect, to them that look no further, and terminate their ſight there; but not to thoſe ſufferers for the Truth, who, with the Eye of Faith, looking beyond it, ſee all thoſe Glories on the other ſide of it, that expect them there; whereunto, as ſome kind of Death muſt neceſſarily be the way, ſo Martyrdom of all, other is the Nobleſt. Wherefore, (concludes *Theodora*) you will very much miſs your aim, if you forbear bringing my conſtancy to the laſt Tryal, only upon hopes, that Death dreſs'd with unuſual Horror, by being beſmear'd with *Didymus*'s Blood, ſhould frighten me into Apoſtacy: For, I am much leſs terrified by his Fate, than encouraged by his Example. In imitation of which, I declare to you once for all, that, as

I always valued this World too little, to be much afraid to part with it for a better; So I ſhall never be brought to quitan excellent Religionfor a bad one, for fear of exchanging a wretched Life for a happy one.

This poſitive and final declaration of *Theodora*, did ſo enrage thoſe to whom ſhe made it, that, finding themſelves quite diſappointed of the hopes they had, to terrifie her by their laſt Expedient, *Didymus*'s Death; they preſently led her away to participate of his Fate, which they found her ſo reſolv'd not to decline. And now the admirable *Theodora*, having receiv'd that cruel, but welcom Command, moſt readily diſpos'd herſelf to obey it: And conſidering how near ſhe was to put a period to all the afflictions of her Life, by the glorioufeſt Action it could be concuded with; and how ſoon ſhe ſhould enjoy the happineſs of entering Heaven, thorough the ſtreighteſt and nobleſt Gate at which

which it is acceſſible: Her Beauty, that was before admirable, appear'd more ſo than ever, being ſtrangely encreas'd, by the effuſions of a Cœleſtial Joy, that did too much abound in her heart, not to flaſh out manifeſtly in her looks; to whoſe native Charms, it ſuperadded ſo much of Luſter and Majeſty, that ſhe ſeem'd (upon ſome peculiar deſign) to be newly come from the Heaven ſhe was going to. So great a conſtancy and chearfulneſs of mind, upon ſo ſad an occaſion, wanted not a reſembling Operation, upon the generality of the wondering Aſſiſtants. For *though* the Report, that was quickly ſpread of ſo uncommon an Action, as that of *Theodora*, done by ſo extraordinary a Perſon, as Fame had repreſented her to be; had drawn a great concourſe of People, to ſee one that acted, as well as look'd, ſo handſomly: *Yet* when they had a while beheld her, and ſaw the cruel Inſtruments of what ſhe was doom'd to ſuffer;

among

among that numerous Throng of Spectators, there were none that were not Admirers; many that look'd on her with dazled, and few without flowing Eyes. Every sort of Spectators found something in her Person and Condition, that made them mournful Ones. The Christians that chanc'd to mingle with the rest of the Crowd, Lamented, to see their Religion depriv'd of so great an Ornament, and so shining an Example; though their grief were moderated by considering, that she was entering into a most happy place, to which they might hope, ere long, to follow her. And in the mean time, 'twas no small credit to their Religion, that a Lady of her Beauty, had liv'd according to the strictest Laws of it; and a Person of her youth and sex, was ambitious to dye for it. Those among the Spectators that yet retain'd *Roman* Spirits, and were the genuine Offspring of those noble Ancestors, that

that ſcrupled not in *Rome* it ſelf, to allow publick marks of honour to its greateſt Enemies; could not but be troubled, to ſee ſo rare a thing as a Female Hero, puniſhed for a Generoſity, that could not ſufficiently be Rewarded; and brought to an untimely, and, in popular eſtimation, Ignominious End, for having followed Dictates of Gratitude and Piety. Thoſe Infidels, on whoſe ſentiments Vertue had more influence than Superſtition, were very much diſſatisfied with the rigour of their Magiſtrates; thought it a diſcredit to their Religion, to uſe ſuch barbarous, and yet ineffectual Courſes, to fright Men into it; and they thought it an invidious ſervice to their Gods, to deſtroy the faireſt Maſterpieces they had made. But thoſe that ſeem'd moſt to deplore the fair Martyrs condition, were thoſe that were diſpos'd to have their Affections wrought on by their Eyes, and were apt to

be

be influenc'd by Beauty. For theſe much repin'd and griev'd, to ſee ſo glorious a *Sun* reduc'd to ſet in her Eaſt. They envy'd *Didymus*, for having ſo generouſly ſerv'd and ſuffer'd for ſo rare a Perſon; who, they thought, inſtead of the barbarous uſage ſhe receiv'd, deſerv'd to be as happy, as her Smiles could make her Adorers. And they allow'd themſelves to think, that nothing could be a Vertue, that depriv'd the World of ſo much Beauty. In ſhort, moſt of the By-ſtanders griev'd, to behold a perſon, whoſe youth would paſs for innocency, and whoſe charms would, give her Captives among Savages deſtroy'd in *Greece* by *Romans*. So that bating thoſe few Barbarians, whoſe Superſtition and Malice brought her to that Condition: All the other Spectators of her Sufferings, were deplorers of them too: And many to that degree, that to judge by Their looks, and thoſe of our fair Martyr, one would have believ'd that the Aſſiſtants were to be

ſufferers in the approaching Tragedy, and She but the Spectator of it.

And now the Matchleſs *Theodora* came to the place, whence her aſpiring Soul was to take its flight to Heaven. In order to which, ſhe firſt look'd about her with a kind of pity, on thoſe, that either never, or later than ſhe, were to be admitted into the felicity ſhe was preſently to poſſeſs: And afterwards ſhe paus'd a while, to recover from ſome diſorder that ſhe was put into; not ſo much to ſee her ſelf environ'd with Guards, as ſurrounded with Gazers: and then, *though* her Baſhfulneſs made it more uneaſie to her to ſpeak to the Aſſiſtants, becauſe her ſpeech muſt be a publick one, than becauſe it muſt be her laſt; *yet* with a Voice and Geſtures, wherein the Modeſty of a Virgin, and the Courage of a Martyr, were happily temper'd, ſhe addreſs'd her ſelf to thoſe that were about her, in ſuch as the following terms.

Since

Since Cuſtom has made it a kind of Duty, that thoſe that come to this place, ſhould ſay ſomething to the Speſtators; and make a publick Confeſſion of their Guilt, or proteſtation of their Innocence; I ſhall in part do both the one and the other. For I will not deny, that I am, what the Laws have condemn'd me for being. Yes; I own my ſelf a Chriſtian, and in ſpight of all my paſt and approaching ſufferings, I declare, that I think it an honour and a happineſs to be ſo. But on the other ſide, I can moſt truly proteſt, that I have tranſgreſs'd no other *Roman* Laws, than thoſe that are repugnant to thoſe of God and Reaſon. And ſince we Chriſtians are taught by our great maſters Example, as well as Precepts, not only to forgive, but to love our Enemies, and pray for our Perſecutors; I think my ſelf oblig'd, and by his aſſiſtance find my ſelf enabled, not only to forgive, as I heartily do, the procurers of my Death, but ardently

to implore for them, the Bleſſing, and the unmoleſted Exerciſe of a Religion, that they ſee I value more than I do my Life. And I hope, thoſe in Authority will, by the frequent Executions that daily ſucceed one another in this place, be at length convinc'd, how ineffectual, as well as inhumane, a way they take, to extirpate Chriſtianity: Which being an Heavenly Light, can be as little ruin'd by the Violence employed againſt it on Earth, as Tempeſts can Extinguiſh the *Sun*. And becauſe 'tis likely that Charity or Curioſity has, among other Spectators, brought hither ſome Chriſtians, I ſhall now addreſs my ſelf to Them; yet not to deſire their Pity, but their Prayers, That I may be enabled to overcome the laſt Enemy, Death, *and finiſh my Courſe*, in ſuch a way, as may neither blemiſh my paſt Life, nor the glorious Cauſe I gladly looſe it for. But the chief part of my Requeſt regards your ſelves, not me. For I muſt beg you

you to remember, that, beſides an All ſeeing Eye, there are many other Eyes upon you, that pry into your Actions with ſtrong deſires to find them Criminal: And that though the truth, nor the ſubſiſtance of Chriſtianity does not, yet the Credit of it does much, depend upon the Nature of your Actions. For, as all your perſonal faults will be imputed to your Religion, ſo your ſhining Vertues, will probably bring many Infidels firſt to admire, and then to embrace Chriſtianity; juſtly concluding, that That Religion muſt be excellent, that makes its profeſſors ſo; and enables, as well as enjoins them, to live blameleſs in the World, and go joyfully out of it. If you lead ſuch lives, you will not be much afraid of Martyrdom; which will but ſend you ſooner to receive thoſe ineſtimable rewards of them, that Gods goodneſs hath promis'd and provided. I wiſh you may never have cauſe, nor upon occaſion want Courage, to

enter

enter into Life at that ſtreight Gate, that I am now going to paſs through. But if you be call'd to that way of glorifying God, let neither the ignominy, nor the painfulneſs of it, deter you. 'Tis not ſhameful, but glorious, to ſuffer for God, for Truth, and for a Crown; and my Example may encourage the weakeſt of you to expect, that *Gods ſtrength will be made manifeſt in your Infirmity*; and that there's no Temptation but may be reſiſted and vanquiſhed, by the weakeſt hand, that is fupported and ſtrengthen'd by an Almighty Arm. And though the diſtance between Heaven and Earth, our Mortal and our Immortal ſtate, be very great; yet the paſſage between them may be very ſhort: and a few moments may bring us to exchange our Agonys for Extaſies, and paſs from the Lamentations of our Friends, and the reproaches of our Perſecutors, to the Congratulations of Angels, and the ſolemn Welcoms of Him, whom even thoſe Heavenly Spirits adore.

As

As ſoon as ſhe had ended this Diſcourſe, though her Soul, abandoning ſuch a Body as hers, could ſcarce any where but in Heaven, find an advantage by a change of Manſion; yet it cheerfully diſpos'd it ſelf to a Separation, that would give it a cloſer and more immediate Union with the Divine Object of its Cœleſtial love. And after ſhe had decently and calmly, made all the preparation that on her part was requiſite for what ſhe was to ſuffer, ſhe thought fit to make her Lifes laſt actions, as moſt of the reſt had been, acts of Piety, and Charity. And therefore elevating her Eyes and Hands towards Heaven, where her Heart, as well as her Treaſure, had been plac'd long before; ſhe firſt paid her God moſt humble thanks, for the Grace and opportunity he had vouchſaf'd her; *not only to believe in his Divine Son, but to ſuffer for him*; and then made a ſhort, but very fervent Prayer, for the Church, for her Enemies, and for her ſelf.

Which done, with a Countenance wherein ſerenity was mingled with joy, ſhe gave a ſign to the Executioner to do his Office; who thereupon did all that was neceſſary to compleat her Martyrdom. And the glad Soul was by the Angels, (whom ſhe had aſpir'd to reſemble in Purity and Devotion) carry'd to that happy place, whoſe Glorys are neither to be Conceiv'd, by thoſe that have not ſeen them, nor Deſcrib'd by thoſe that have; ſuch ſupernatural Felicities, as much Tranſcending mans *Idea*'s and his Expreſſions as they ſurpaſs his Merit.

1 *Cor.* 11. 9.

2 *Cor.* 12. 4.

THE

THE CONTENTS OF THE Second Book, Of the MARTYRDOM OF *THEODORA.*

CHAP. I.

DIdymus *hearing of* Theodora's *Captivity and Danger, addreſſes himſelf in order to her Reſcue, to a* Roman *Officer, whoſe Soldiers were appointed for her Guard;*

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Guard; and by His Favour and their Aſſiſtance, He is admitted into her Chumber, under the Notion of one that came to Raviſh Her.

CHAP. II.

There he preſſes her to make an Eſcape in his Clothes: She for a good while ſcruples to make uſe of this Expedient; and inſtead of it, propoſes that he would Kill her: (ſhe thinging it Lawful, as many then did, to die by anothers hand, and not by her own.)

CHAP. III.

After this obliging conteſt, ſhe yields to change Habits with him, and thus Diſguis'd makes an Eſcape, and is receiv'd into Irenes *Houſe, with great wonder and joy.*

CHAP.

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CHAP. IV.

Irene *takes this occaſion, to repreſent to her the extraordinary merits of her Deliverer and Lover. But* Theodora, *after very kind acknowledgments of them, declares the Reſolution ſhe had made againſt Marriage, and the Reaſons that had induc'd her to make it.*

CHAP. V.

Theodora *hearing what had happen'd to* Didymus *after her Eſcape, reſolves, though earneſtly diſwaded by* Irene, *to attempt his Reſcue.*

CHAP. VI.

A Gentleman brings an Account, how Didymus *was apprehended, and carried before the Judge: How he own'd and defended what he had done, and his Religion: And how He*

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He was Condemn'd in ſpight of this Defence.

CHAP. VII.

Whilſt Didymus *is leading away to the place of Execution,* Theodora *preſents herſelf before the Judg, and begs to have him Releas'd: Offering to undergo the Death, that he was Condemned to, on her account. She ſpeaks to* Didymus, *to perſwade him to acquieſce in that Propoſal: Whereupon grows a long Conteſt between them before the Judge.*

CHAP. VIII.

He Condemns them both to die for being Chriſtians. Divers Diſcourſes paſs between them, as they go towards the place of Execution.

CHAP.

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CHAP. IX.

A Roman *Officer ſtrives to perſwade* Didymus *to change his Religion, by ſeveral Arguments: To all which He gives him ſuch reſolute Anſwers, That,*

CHAP. X.

The Roman *deſpairing to gain him, endeavours to engage him to perſwade* Theodora *to ſave her Life; which* Didymus *refuſes to do, for Reaſons which includes an Encomium of Her Vertues.*

CHAP. XI.

None of their Attempts ſucceeding, both the Martyrs are commanded to be put to Death. The farewel Speeches that paſt betwixt them. Their final Separation; immediately after which, Didymus *is firſt Executed.*

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CHAP. XII.

Theodora, *being in vain ſolicited to ſhun the like tragical Fate, after a reſolute Anſwer to her Perſecutors, and a ſhort Speech to the By-ſtanders, acompany'd with a Prayer for them; Receives the Crown of Martyrdom.*

FINIS.

KURT CASPER & SONS
HOLLAND PA